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ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

WILLIAM GILLETTE

HAROLD ROORBACH

PUBLISHER

132 Nassau Street, New York

All the Comforts of Home

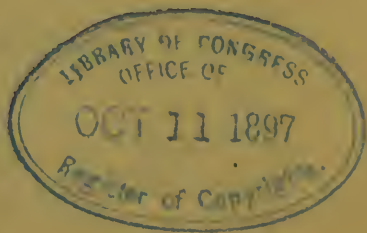
A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

WILLIAM GILLETTE

*As produced at the Boston Museum, for the first time, Monday,
March 3d, 1890*

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NEW YORK
HAROLD ROORBACH, PUBLISHER

132 NASSAU STREET

All the Comforts of Home.

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Dramatis Personæ and Original Cast.

ALFRED HASTINGS, <i>Pettibone's nephew</i>	MR. JOHN MASON.
TOM McDOW, <i>a protégé of Alfred's</i>	MR. GEO. W. WILSON.
THEODORE BENDER, Esq., <i>a retired produce dealer</i> .	MR. GEO. C. BONIFACE.
JOSEPHINE BENDER, <i>his wife</i>	MISS ANNIE M. CLARKE.
EVANGELINE BENDER, <i>their daughter</i>	MISS MIRIAM O'LEARY.
MR. EGBERT PETTIBONE, <i>a peculiarly jealous man</i> .	MR. THOS. L. COLEMAN.
ROSABELLE PETTIBONE, <i>his second wife</i>	MISS LILIAN HADLEY.
EMILY PETTIBONE, <i>Pettibone's daughter</i>	MISS EVELYN CAMPBELL.
CHRISTOPHER DABNEY, <i>a broken-down music-teacher</i> .	MR. CHAS. S. ABBE.
JUDSON LANGHORNE, <i>a young man of leisure</i>	MR. ERROLL DUNBAR.
FIFI ORITANSKI, <i>from the Opéra Comique</i>	MISS ENMA V. SHERIDAN.
AUGUSTUS McSNATH, <i>a friend of Pettibone's youth</i> .	MR. JAMES BURROWS.
VICTOR SMYTHE, <i>in love with Emily Pettibone</i> . . .	MR. JUNIUS B. BOOTH.
THOMPSON, <i>a shoe-dealer</i>	MR. H. P. WHITEMORE.
KATY, <i>maid at Pettibone's</i>	MISS MARY HEBRON.
GRETCHEN, <i>Fifi's maid</i>	MISS BLAKE.
BAILIFF, <i>merely a bailiff</i>	MR. EDWARD WADE.

WHERE IS IT ?

Drawing-room of a private house in London.

WHEN IS IT ?

Now.

ACT I.—A Morning. WHAT TIME IS IT ?

ACT II.—A Few Moments Later.

ACT III.—Another Morning.

ACT IV.—The Same Morning.
(Good-Morning.)

TIME OF PLAYING.—TWO HOURS AND THIRTY-FIVE MINUTES.

“AN’ I GITS HALF.”

Costumes.

ALFRED. Ordinary business suit. Change in Act III. for costume suitable for an afternoon call.

TOM. Grotesque assortment of garments all rather the worse for wear.

BENDER.

JOSEPHINE.

EVANGELINE.

} The attire of a well-to-do provincial family on a visit to the metropolis. BENDER has gray hair.

PETTIBONE. Black frock coat and waistcoat; fancy trousers; overcoat; silk hat; gloves. He has iron-gray hair and mustache.

MRS. PETTIBONE. Act I. — 1st dress, morning-gown; 2d dress, travelling costume. Act IV. — Same as 2d dress in Act I.

EMILY. Act I. — 1st dress, street gown, hat, gloves, parasol, etc.; 2d dress, travelling costume. Act IV. — Same as 2d dress in Act I.

DABNEY. Eccentric and old-fashioned clothes; tall hat, etc., for 1st enter. Dressing-gown, flannels, bandages, etc., for invalid bus. at end of Act II. and in Act IV. He wears a bald wig.

LANGHORNE. Clothes ultra-fashionable and somewhat loud. He carries a small cane and red or tan gloves. Small mustache.

FIFI. Very stylish street costume and house-dress. Comic-opera costume ("Prince Vladimir") at end of Act II.

MCSNATH. Ordinary rig of an elderly business man. Light-gray hair and whiskers.

SMYTHE. Fashionable but quiet attire, complete in every detail.

THOMPSON.

BAILIFF.

KATY. Maid-servant's costume, with outer garments for travelling.

GRETCHEN. Street dress; neat but plain.

Properties.

ACT I. — Small table up L. Ottoman L. Shelves with books, ornaments, etc., against wall L. Table R. or R. C., with armchair L. of it, and smaller chairs R. and back of it. Upright piano C. or up R. Large mirror up R. Pictures on walls and bric-a-brac around room. Desk L. with chair before it. Other chairs conveniently disposed about stage. Table up stage. Hat-rack up L. C. Carpet down. Key in door R. 3 E. Open letter and watch for PETTIBONE. Satchel, two or three small parcels, and bird in cage for EMILY. Bell on table R. Fan and several small parcels for MRS. PETTIBONE. Books, portfolio, papers, writing-materials, etc., on desk L. Money (in envelope) and keys in PETTIBONE's pockets. Travelling things for EMILY and KATY. Parcel, rolled in carrying-straps, for ALFRED, to contain cuffs and shirts, etc., showing at the ends; a few books; a pair of fencing-foils; a set of boxing-gloves; a pair of riding-boots; a long pipe and a bootjack. Notebook and pencil for ALFRED. Umbrella, gripsack, and other travellers' articles for PETTIBONE. Two small dogs. Package of bird-seed. Sponge and cake of soap. Pawn-ticket for ALFRED. A painted sign, "Elegantly Furnished Apartments to Let," with the bottom portion broken or torn off. Crashes overhead; off L. 2 E.; and outside, up L. Two feather-beds, two bolsters, and two blankets overhead. Water-pitcher and glasses on table up stage. Money for SMYTHE. Bills in pocket-book for DABNEY. Red pigment (blood) for TOM. Box on desk L., containing two small articles (audiphones) for the ears. Card-case, containing cards, for FIFI.

ACT II. — Furnishings, etc., as in Act I. Tray of breakfast things, cup of tea, package, bunch of keys, mustard-plaster, pail of hot water, and sealed note for TOM. Bells off stage up R. ; L. 2 E. ; and overhead. Pipe, tobacco in bag, and matches for BENDER. Dressmaker's bill (L. 3 E.) for FIFI. Hat and cane for BENDER. Jewel-case off R. 3 E. Bundle of legal papers for BAILIFF. Bill for THOMPSON. Money in ALFRED's pocket. Money, in purse, for JOSEPHINE. Newspaper in ALFRED's pocket. Table-cover, on table near C., for BENDER to snatch. Mustard-plaster for DABNEY.

ACT III. — Furniture, etc., as before. Large pasteboard box, as per description, page 74, for TOM. Pot of black paint and brush on table C. Bells off stage, L. 2 E. ; and up R. Hook on wall near foot of stairs. Hat and cane for BENDER. Bell, pipe, paper novel, beer-mug, and noise overhead. Hat for ALFRED to enter with. Newspaper. Demijohn, newspaper in wrapper, sealed letter, and two bottles of champagne for TOM. Umbrella off R. 3 E. TELEGRAM. Key for FIFI. Breakfast-hamper containing two bottles of champagne (one a dummy); some French chops ; a salad and other fancy dishes ; rolls ; corkscrew ; wine-glasses ; knives, plates, tablecloth, napkins, etc., for two ; also two bunches of flowers for corsage and buttonhole. Fountain pen for ALFRED. Book on table. Vase for BENDER to smash. Crash and step-ladder off R. 3 E.

ACT IV. — Furniture, etc., as before. Table up C. Money in purses, satchels, parcels, and other travelling things used in Act I., for MRS. PETTIBONE and EMILY. Towel about DABNEY's head. Rugs, umbrella, portmanteau, etc., for PETTIBONE. Lock inside of door L. 3 E. Papers and plaster (L. 2 E.) for PETTIBONE. Dressmaker's bill for BENDER. Paper (used in Act I.) for ALFRED.

Abbreviations.

In observing, the player is supposed to face the audience. C. means centre ; R., right ; L., left ; R. C., right of centre ; L. C., left of centre ; C. D., centre door ; R. D., right door ; L. D., left door ; D. R. C., door right of centre ; D. L. C., door left of centre ; D. F., door in the flat ; C. D. F., centre door in the flat ; R. D. F., right door in the flat ; L. D. F., left door in the flat ; 1 G., 2 G., 3 G., etc., first, second, or third grooves, etc. ; 1 E., 2 E., 3 E., etc., first, second, or third entrances, etc. ; R. U. E., right upper entrance ; L. U. E., left upper entrance ; UP, up stage or toward the rear ; DOWN, down stage or toward the audience.

R.

R. C.

C.

L. C.

L.

All the Comforts of Home.

ACT I.

SCENE. — *Parlor or drawing-room in* EGBERT PETTIBONE'S *house. A handsome room, luxuriously furnished. Large square or arched opening up R. C., through which is seen a large heavy door up R. to open on stage, and also the lower part of a winding stairway, leading up, and practical, with balustrade, etc. A door up R. near 3, set on diagonal so that it faces toward middle of front of stage. This door has a transom above it to open. The door opens on the stage. Door down R. Wide or double doors up L. C., to open up stage. Interior backing showing a window (practical), and above this street backing. Door down L. Door up L. or L. 3. Doors R. and L. are each backed with handsome interior pieces. It is important that the door up R., near stairs, should be solid, to slam heavily; and it would add greatly to the effect if all the doors could be similarly built, and the transom over door R. 3. Handsome tables, chairs, etc., as per bus. A small table up L., either in corner or against wall, to pull out for bus. An ottoman or short lounge L. Shelves for books, ornaments, etc., against wall L., for bus. (BENDER upsetting things, ACT III.) Handsome table R. C. Upright piano up C. or at R. A large and elegantly mounted mirror (for bus.) up R., either just above door R. 3 or up C. This mirror may be a part of some large and elegant piece of furniture. Handsomely framed pictures (paintings, etc.) hang on walls R. and L. and up stage. One or two at R., slightly*

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various figure-paintings, but not too much so. Chairs, etc., in room back of door up 1. C., and furniture of a characteristic nature up above opening up R.

NOTE. — *As this scene stands for the evening, advantage should be taken of the fact to have the setting very complete in every respect. Rich, luxurious furniture, cases of books and bric-a-brac, etc. Handsomely framed paintings, etc., hanging on walls. Hall up R. Stairs and rooms R. and 1. outside of doors, carpeted with different varieties of stuff, etc.*

MUSIC. — *Lively music for Curtain. Continue pp. a few bars after curtain is up. READY EMILY, to enter door up R.*

DISCOVERED, **EGBERT PETTIBONE**, facing up and down and around room in a very excited state, with a letter in his hand. *Runs other hand through his hair distractedly. Drops into chair; looks at the letter; buries face in hands. Jumps suddenly up and paces again. Repeats chair bus.*

PETTIBONE. I have suspected it all along! Now it is no longer suspicion — it is certainty. (*Bus.*) I was cautioned against marrying a young wife — at my age. Ah! — kind friends (*agony; eyes up to ceiling*) — kind friends — you were right. (*Bus. Letter to light.*) I have a copy of her letter — making the appointment. (*Looks at it. Reads.*) “Come this afternoon between one and two o’clock. No one will be here to disturb us!” Oh! (*Bus.*) I have arranged that! (*Paces about the room, muttering.*) Some one will be here to disturb you Mr. — Mr. — (*looks at letter*) Victor Smythe!

ENTER EMILY PETTIBONE door up R.; hat and walking dress on, as if just in from street. *She has two or three small parcels and a little satchel such as ladies carry for shopping. She is about to pass the wide door of room up R., when her father’s*

conduct attracts her attention. She comes into the room a little way, watching him, and soon bursts into a merry laugh. PETTIBONE turns quickly. Crosses to and fro R. and L. Conceals letter.

EMILY (C.). How many laps have you made since breakfast? (*Laughs again. Comes down L. of PETTIBONE.*) Do tell me what is the matter this morning.

PET. (R. ; *goes to and fro and stops R., meeting her.*) Matter? Nothing!

EMILY (C. ; *peremptorily, but good-naturedly.*) You hid a letter — I want to see it! (*Bus.*)

PET. (R. C.). No! No! (*Avoiding her.*)

EMILY. What! As bad as that! I shall have to report this to my stepmamma.

PET. (*aghast*). What! Report that I — that I — (*aside*).

[EMILY bursts out laughing again.]

EMILY (L. C.) Oh — but you're in a state!

PET. (R. C. ; *recovers*). Ah — e — hem! It's only business, my child.

EMILY. Business! (*Looks incredulous.*)

PET. Listen! You have often expressed a wish to travel — to see the world. (*Crosses to L.*)

EMILY. Yes; but you needn't go into convulsions about it, papa! I can wait a little!

PET. You will not have to wait! We start to-day!

EMILY. Oh! you dear — (*about to embrace him*) good —

PET. (*stopping her*). No! We haven't time for that! (*Crosses to L. and R.*)

[READY KATY, to enter door up L. C.]

EMILY. Goodness! You must be in an awful hurry!

PET. Hurry? I am in a — (*stops in midst of rising rage; aside*). No — no — no! She must not suspect. (*Aloud.*) Emily, my dear (*kisses her, but in an excited and mechanical fashion*), I am suddenly compelled to go to the Continent

on business of vast importance. I shall take you and — and your stepmother with me.

EMILY (L.). Oh! That is simply heavenly!

PET. (R.). You have only half an hour to get ready!

EMILY. Ready now — walk right off with you — only want to throw some things into a trunk.

PET. (R.). Your trunks are packed.

[EMILY now surprised.]

EMILY (L.). Dear me, Popsy, but you are in a hurry! Did Katy —

PET. I told her to put in everything she saw. (PETTIBONE rings bell violently, on table R., dropping it, etc., in excitement.)

EMILY (aghast). Everything she saw — Mercy!

[READY knock and voice up R.]

[ENTER KATY, door up L. C.]

PET. My daughter's trunks — are they packed yet? Are they packed, I say?

KATY (up L. C.). Yes, sir — they are, sir.

PET. (R.). And — Mrs. Pettibone — her trunks — our trunks — ?

KATY. They're all ready, sir — but she doesn't understand why —

PET. (suddenly forgetting himself). Eh! (Eagerly.) What did she say, eh?

KATY. She said it was her opinion, sir, as you was gone completely crazy.

PET. She's right! I — e — Go and tell her she's right, do you hear? (Fumes about.)

KATY. Yes, sir!

(EXIT KATY, up L. C.)

[EMILY, who has been watching PETTIBONE, bursts into laughter.]

PET. Do! And if she wants to know — (PETTIBONE stops suddenly and looks sheepish.)

EMILY (L. ; solemnly, shaking finger at PETTIBONE). Popsy — there's something at the bottom of all this !

PET. (R.). No ! (*Shakes head emphatically.*) Nothing at all, only business. (*Turns L., shaking head, muttering about business, etc. Paces out into hall up R.*)

[*Knock outside, R.*

READY MRS. PETTIBONE, to enter up L. C.

(*Calling off R. D., to someone.*) Is that the cab ? Is the cab there, I say ?

VOICE (*outside, R.*). Yes, sir ; and the men are here for the luggage.

PET. Send them up the other way. The other way, you fool !

VOICE (*outside, R.*). Yes, sir.

EMILY (*starting*). Mercy ! I must see if Katy has put in everything — and my bird — and, and — oh, dear ! (*Runs off, up L. C.*)

PET. (*coming down R. ; looks at watch nervously as he paces*). Now, why doesn't Alfred come ! I sent word from the office an hour ago that he must come at once — and it's long after that now. He must stay here in the house — he can't object — far better quarters than the little garret where he's lodging now. And I must let him know that I approve of his suit with Emily — and I must give directions about the house. Confound it ! (*Paces.*) We haven't fifteen minutes — and — all these things to be settled ! (*Crosses L.*)

ENTER MRS. PETTIBONE, up L. C. NOTE. — Mrs.

PETTIBONE is very deliberate and cool, a contrast to the others.

PET. (*comes down R. C. ; aside*). Ah — my wife — Now for it ! (*Goes L.*) Have you attended to the packing, Madam ?

MRS. PETTIBONE (*sits L. of R. table ; chilly tone*). Oh, yes — I have nothing to do but attend to your orders.

PET. We are about to start on a — a little trip.

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MRS. P. (*stops fan bus. ; looks at PETTIBONE*). Ah ! When do we go, pray ?

PET. (*watching her narrowly*). We leave — this morning.

[MRS. PETTIBONE *starts slightly*.

(*Aside, quickly.*) She started !

READY ALFRED, *to enter up R.*

MRS. P. (*aside*). Poor Victor ! He will be heartbroken.

PET. (*aside ; watching her*). She is thinking of the appointment ! I can see it !

MRS. P. (*aside*). He must overcome his impatience until we return.

PET. Come, come ! It is nearly time. Your things — Your — your — (*Stops as he meets her gaze. Crosses R.*)

MRS. P. (*rising and crossing up to L. C. D. : looks calmly at PETTIBONE ; walks leisurely to door up L. C. ; turns*). I suppose it has not occurred to you to tell me where we are going — whether to Asia, Africa, the North Pole, or the Sandwich Islands ?

PET. (*Crosses up to C.*). I — I — You will know before — before —

MRS. P. Before I get there ? That would be delightful !

(*EXIT up L. C.*)

[PETTIBONE *stands speechless, looking after her*.

PET. (*L. C.*). Oh — you are very composed ! Yet I saw you start once — and — and this letter — this letter ! (*Grinds teeth.*)

ENTER ALFRED HASTINGS *up R., carrying a parcel rolled in carrying straps — cuffs and shirts, etc., showing at the ends ; a few books ; a pair of foils ; a set of boxing-gloves ; a pair of riding-boots ; a long pipe, and a bootjack.*

(*Seeing ALFRED.*) What in the name of common-sense kept you all this time ? I said at once ! At once !

ALFRED (*R.*). Kind and severe uncle and guardian, you did.

But you also ordered me to bring all my belongings, as I was to stay here. These orders of yours clashed. My landlady objected to the removal of my property.

PET. (L.). Then you left it, of course?

ALF. Oh, no; I brought it.

PET. Those?

ALF. These. (*Puts things down on table R.*)

PET. Is that all?

ALF. No; I have quite an assortment of pawn-tickets in my pockets. (*Sits luxuriously L. of R. table.*) It's the best way to have property — a fellow can move so easily.

PET. (L.; *starting suddenly*). Well, we have no time to talk. (*Becomes more and more excited.*) I am starting on a journey with my family.

ALF. (*slight surprise*). Don't say!

PET. Yes. You are to stay here and take care of the house. No one is to know where I am going. Not a soul — not a soul.

ALF. Well, where is it?

PET. I — haven't made up my mind.

ALF. Devilish good idea! So long as you don't know, I don't think anybody else is likely to discover.

PET. If they do — if he follows us — (*Bus.*)

ALF. (*after watching PETTIBONE quietly, rises*). Let me feel your pulse. (*Bus.*)

PET. Nonsense! Don't interrupt me — we have only four minutes. Now, as to my daughter Emmy. You love her — don't interrupt — I know it — it's all right — you have my consent.

ALF. By Jove! (*Bus. as if to seize PETTIBONE's hand.*)

PET. (*pulling away*). No — we haven't time for that! (*Goes to desk L., nervously. Bus. with things. Throws papers about excitedly.*)

ALF. (C., *aside*). Gave his consent — but doesn't know what he's saying. I'll make him put it in writing. (*Scrawls*

quickly on note-book. Alfred. Sign this. *(Going to PETTIBONE, L.)*

PET. *(looking)*. What is it?

ALF. Your consent. You might die — I think you will.

PET. *(L.)*. Well, well! *(Scrubs his name on the consent.)*
You are not rich — but I can trust you.

ALF. Thanks. So can I.

PET. It is said cousins should not marry — that their children are liable to be lunatics. Nonsense! Perfect rubbish!

ALF. Nothing in it.

PET. Nothing. *(Laughs derisively.)* Ha, ha, ha!

ALF. Absurd! Ha, ha!

PET. Ridiculous! Ha, ha, ha! Simply ridiculous! Why, look here! My own parents were cousins themselves!

ALF. *(stops laughing; aside)*. By Jove! There's something in it after all!

PET. *(L.)*. Now, listen! I will tell you why I leave town so suddenly. It is because my wife *(grasps Alfred's sleeve; kisses in his ear)* is deceiving me! She is false! False!

ALF. *(C.)*. Now you're wrong, Uncle, believe me!

PET. "Believe me!" Don't I know? Oh! I have overlooked a good many things. Dudes and coxcombs paying all sorts of attention to her — confound them! *(Bus. Rushes up and down L. Stops before Alfred again.)* But now I have proof — proof, I tell you! I have seen a fine gentleman lingering near for some time — following us to concerts, theatres, operas, — always getting a seat as near as possible. There have been looks exchanged — there have been letters written —

ALF. *(R.)*. The deuce!

PET. *(L.)*. Ah! you begin to see! *(Paces excitedly.)*

ALF. No, sir; I don't see anything!

PET. *(vehemently; first glances L.)*. Then, look! See some-

thing! Her letter! Making an appointment — here! Two o'clock! "No one to disturb us!" Ugh! Read! Read! (*Paces about room.*)

[ALFRED looks at letter, and gives a whistle. (*Starting*). Ugh! Don't do that — read — read!

ALF. (*R., reading*). "My dear Mr. Smythe: I will grant you the interview you ask. Come this afternoon between one and two o'clock. My husband is at his business then, and no one will be here to disturb us. You must be very cautious, however, or you will spoil all. Yours ever, Rosabelle Pettibone." (*Turns it over.*) This is in your handwriting, I observe.

PET. (*L.*). Yes—I copied it; and then I sent the original on. He will get it! He will come! His name is Victor Smythe, d — n him — and there will be some one here to disturb him!

ALF. Of course. You will wait and fight him!

PET. Fight? That is what he wants — to put me out of the way! No, sir! I am going to surprise him! He will find you here to receive him!

ALF. Jove! You surprise me!

PET. And you must give him a reception that he won't forget. (*Doubles fists and pantomimes.*)

ALF. I must, eh? (*Smiling bus.*)

[PETTIBONE, *bus. of sighing vigorously.* (*Laughing.*) All right. I'll attend to the gentleman.

PET. You will?

ALF. Certainly! Delighted — dislocate his nose. (*Bus.*)

PET. (*delighted*). That's it!

ALF. Knock out an eye.

PET. (*bus.; enthusiasm*). Good! Ha, ha!

[READY MRS. PETTIBONE, *to enter L. C.*

ALF. Lacerate an ear

PET. (*bus.*). Ha, ha! Yes! Ha, ha!

ALF. Do him up generally.

PET. (*bus.*). Do him up! Ha, ha!

ALF. Then — to avoid unpleasant results — tell him it was all a terrible mistake — wrong man — apologize — sew up his ear — set his nose — write a prescription — and charge him five pounds.

PET. Ha, ha! You're a nephew after my own heart!

ALF. (*R. C.*). No! It's your daughter's heart I'm after.

PET. (*C.*). Yes! I see! Ha, ha! [*Both laugh.*
(*Suddenly.*) What! (*Watch.*) It's time to start! Merciful powers! Suppose the fellow should find me here! (*Rushes L. C. Calls off.*) Here — Emmy! Rosabelle! Hurry! Hurry! (*Dances back to ALFRED. Bus. of getting things from pockets.*) Here — money — carry you through this month. I'll send more soon. Take good care of everything — keys. (*Bus.*) Look out for this one — key to wine-cellar. (*Crosses L.*)

[*READY EMILY and KATY, to enter L.*
ENTER MRS. PETTIBONE, L. C. She is in travelling costume. Carries several parcels, and is buttoning her glove.

MRS. P. (*down C.*). Ah, Alfred! I suppose you have not heard that we —

PET. (*L.*). Yes, yes! He is to live here and take care of the house. If any one comes, he will receive them!

[*MRS. PETTIBONE starts slightly. Crosses to L. (Aside to ALFRED — quickly.)* Did you see that?

[*ALFRED nods. MRS. PETTIBONE, L. PETTIBONE picks up overcoat, hat, etc., up C., still keeping his eye on MRS. PETTIBONE.*

MRS. P. (*aside*). If I could only get word to him not to come!

PET. (*down C.*). Come, come! No more delay! (*Up to L. C., and calls.*) Emmy! Emmy! (*Up and down C., glancing excitedly at MRS. PETTIBONE now and then.*)

EMILY (*outside, L. C.*). Coming, papa! Coming!

MRS. P. (*to ALFRED; approaching*). Your uncle seems to be having some kind of a fit to-day.

ALF. (R. ; *aside*). A mis-fit, I should say.

ENTER EMILY, L., with travelling things, bird-cage with bird, etc., followed by KATY, also prepared for journey, and leading pug dogs by strings, or carrying them.

EMILY (*down c.*). Here I am — and (*sees ALFRED*). O Alfred! Good-by! (*Holds out her hand to him.*) Did you ever hear of such a sudden start?

ALF. (R. ; *to EMILY*). Your father has consented.

EMILY (C.). What!

ALF. (R.). Look at that! (*Shows paper.*)

EMILY. He's crazy! (*Gives ALFRED a look. Crosses to R.*)

[*PETTIBONE and MRS. PETTIBONE have filled time with bus. of getting ready.*

PET. (*down L. c.*). Emily! You don't intend to carry the birds! And your dogs, Rosabelle —

EMILY (R.). But how could we leave them, with no one to take care of the darlings?

PET. (*going to D. up R.*). Didn't I say that Alfred is to stay here?

EMILY. Oh! (*Bus.*) Then you shall take care of my little birdies!

MRS. P. (*taking dogs from KATY and hurrying L. to ALFRED, who is C.*). And my darlings! I'll trust them to you, Alfred! (*Giving them to ALFRED.*)

EMILY. There are the seeds. (*Getting them from KATY up C., and down R. of ALFRED. Putting packages in ALFRED'S R. hand.*) And you know about the fresh water every morning? (*Bus.*)

PET. (*near door up R.*). We must go, I tell you!

[*Both ladies exclaim, and hurry toward door up R.*

MRS. P. (L. of ALFRED; *bus.*). They must have a walk every day — and no meat! And — (*getting sponge and soap from KATY.*)

EMILY (R. ; *to ALFRED*). And if their feathers come out —

MRS. P. Oh — and the bath-sponge and soap — the dog soap — (*putting it under ALFRED'S L. arm*).

EMILY. And green things. Come, mamma!

[PETTIBONE *calls*. *All call good-by, etc., and EXE-UNT' door up R., leaving ALFRED loaded with cages, dogs, and any truck that can go with them. READY TOM, to enter up R.*

ALF. Good-by! Good-by! (*Bus. of following them to door, waving dogs, bird-cages, etc.; stumbling about.*) I'll take care of everything! (*Turns and goes across to L. after bus.*) I'll give these things a dose of arsenic. Here — they can just go in here for the present. There you are! (*Etc., to fill out bus. ALFRED puts poodles, birds, etc., off at door L. 3. Surveys the place.*) This isn't so bad! Uncle Egbert's jealousy may be deuced annoying to him, but I don't mind it in the least. An elegant mansion at my disposal — not to speak of the key to the — (*smiles*). Now, if I could only think of some way to raise the money for old Hiflin's note that comes due to-morrow, I'd be perfectly serene. As I can't, I'll be serene anyway. Let's see — he didn't leave me enough to — (*looks at contents of envelope*). No — oh, no — bare expenses. I — oh, by Jove! I forgot all about Tom. (*Goes into room up L. C., and opens window back. Speaks off.*) Hello, there! Tom! Come in; you'll find the door open! (*Shuts window and comes down.*) I can give him a lodging now; that'll help the poor chap along a little, anyhow. Heaven knows I'd give him money if I had it; he's had a hard row to hoe. (*Sits L. of R. table luxuriously in easy-chair, half reclining. Smokes.*)

ENTER TOM McDOW up R., stopping uncertainly at entrance to room.

Hello!

TOM (*down C.*). Gee-whiffles! 'This ain't the place, is it?

ALF. (*seated R.*). Yaas — I've decided to take the house for a few months, although it isn't quite up to what I wanted.

TOM. Holy smoke! You must 'a' struck it rich!

ALF. Thomas, this is my uncle's house. He has gone abroad with his entire family. I am to stay here and look out for things. You are to stay and look out for me!

TOM. Yes, sir. (*Looks about.*) What shall I go at first, sir?

ALF. Well, the first thing required is to entertain a certain gentleman named Victor Smythe, who is expected to call here between one and two. Thomas, remove my raiments. [*TOM takes ALFRED'S traps off table R., puts them into room R. 2 E., and returns to C.*

(*Raises himself a little absently, feeling for watch. Pulls out pawn-ticket. Bus.*) Ah! My watch is being — 'hem — regilded. (*Reclines again.*) No matter. We can tell the time by Smythe. When he comes it'll be about one o'clock.

TOM. Will we receive him with honor, sir?

ALF. (*still seated R.*). Eh? Oh, yes! We will honor him with one of the most scientific thrashings known to art.

TOM. (*C.; putting himself into pugilistic attitude*). Thrashings? You don't mean — (*motion or two — absently, looking questioningly at same time at ALFRED*).

ALF. That is the idea. I've given my word to attend to it — and I trust I can count upon you — to —

TOM. Count, Mr. Hastings! I'd do anything in the world for you.

ALF. Thanks —

TOM. After your kindness to me, sir, and getting me out of that there scrape —

ALF. That's all right (*waving hand to quiet TOM*).

TOM. And borrowin' the money to do it —

ALF. (*rising up a little*). But I know all about it, my boy.

TOM. And promisin' to take me into your office —

ALF. (*emphatically*). When I have one, Thomas.

TOM. Quite right, sir. And this note that's a-bothering you, Mr. Hastings — if I could only think of some way to

fix it — I'd — (*looks about*). If this was on'y your house, now, we could sell it, couldn't we?

ALF. Yes — or let it — and live on the income in affluence and luxury.

TOM (*business of trying all the chairs by sitting on them one after another*). This here funnitoo an' fixin's would fetch a tidy little pile — an' here we are only two of us to sit in 'em. It's clear waste, sir, that's what it is!

[ALFRED *sits up, and looks around room.*

ALF. Wait a minute. (*Bus. of looking, etc.*) It's all right!

TOM. Is it, though?

ALF. (*rises to c.*). Yes. We'll let these rooms to lodgers!

[TOM *glances about quickly.*

(*Excitedly.*) It's one of the most desirable places in town.

(R. C.) Make 'em pay a month in advance, of course.

TOM (L. C.). Of course — or two months — or a year, sir!

ALF. No — a month will do. Then I can take care of that infernal note, and keep out of the clutches of the law. I want you to go in with me on this —

TOM. I'd do anything in the world for —

ALF. Yes — I know. I can't pay you, though — haven't got it. But I'll take you into partnership, by Jove!

TOM (*doubtfully*). What'll that do to me, sir?

ALF. We go in together, don't you see? I run the — er — the business part of it — you take care of the lodgers — we divide the profits.

TOM. Divide the prof —

ALF. You get half.

TOM. I gits — half! Do you really mean it, sir?

[ALFRED *nods.*

(*Delighted.*) Ha, ha, ha!

[ALFRED *laughs also. Slaps TOM on back.*

ALF. May make your fortune, my boy.

TOM. It ain't that, sir! I don't care for the money — but — ge-whiffles! I gits half! Ha, ha, ha! That's the first time as such a thing ever occurred to me — I give ye my word, it is. (TOM *bus. of hopping about with delight.*) What's to do, sir? Oh — just gimme something to do — quick! (TOM *in his restlessness is near door up R. on this speech.*)

ALF. The first thing is to get a sign out announcing lodgings to let; a nicely painted —

TOM. Yes, sir! (*EXIT quickly door up R.*)

ALF. Artistic sort of thing that will attract. Hello, the fellow's gone! (*Looks about.*) This is a clever scheme, by Jove! and he put it into my head. He'll be just the one to help me with it too. He'd do anything in the world for me. Never saw a fellow so grateful as he was when I pulled him through that little scrape he was foolish enough to get into. (*Sits at desk L., and writes.*) Now, I suppose some sort of a lease or agreement is necessary — or — let me see — “Rules for Lodgers.” That's it! Rules is what I want. First. “Rent must be paid strictly in advance.” (*Writes it. Looks about as if trying to think of something else.*) That's the only rule that seems to occur to me. In this case — oh — ah — (*writes*). “Children and dogs” — what is it that children and dogs do? Oh, yes — (*writes*). That settles children and dogs. Here's another. (*Writes.*) “Anything ordered will be charged extra.” That doesn't sound quite right, someway; but it'll have to go.

[*ENTER TOM quickly up R.*]

TOM. (R.). Here it is, sir!

ALF. (L.). What?

TOM. The sign. (TOM *shows a nicely painted sign which reads —*

ELEGANTLY FURNISHED
APARTMENTS
TO LET.

The bottom portion being evidently broken or torn off.)

ALF. In Heaven's name where did you get that?

TOM. Just down the street.

ALF. Buy it?

TOM. Not much — took it off a house.

ALF. Good gracious, my boy, that's going too far!

TOM (*breathless*). Only four doors past the corner, sir.

ALF. But, see here — you'll get us into trouble — it's theft, or burglary, or something of that kind.

TOM. Theft? No, sir. It says 'ere, "elegantly furnished apartments," sir. They warn't nothing of the kind — they're terrors.

ALF. How do you know?

TOM. I see 'em through the winders, sir; the furnishin's is vile. An' I says to myself, I'll take down this lyin', swindlin' sign, an' put it where it'll speak the truth, and nothin' but the truth — an' that's on this here house, sir. An' up she goes — an' I gits half! (*EXIT, door up R.*)

ALF. But I say — here, Tom! He's certainly taking hold of the business with a vengeance. If he goes on like this, we'll end up with elegantly furnished apartments in the police station.

ENTER TOM up R. — breathless, as from rushing up and down stairs, etc.

TOM (R.). It's up, sir — an' they's three parties as stands starin' at it a-ready, with their eyes as big as oyster-shells.

ALF. (L. C.). But first, as to the rooms. We'll have to settle how much we're going to ask.

[ALFRED goes to different doors, followed by TOM; first to L. 2 E., passing L. 3 E. to L. C. D., then crosses to R. 3 E. and R. 2 E.]

TOM (*murmuring to himself*). An' I gits half!

ALF. It isn't arranged like an ordinary house for lodgings, is it?

TOM. No, sir, I can't say as it is. (*Very downcast.*)

ALF. All the better.

TOM (*suddenly reviving spirits*). Yes, sir. All the better.

[ALFRED *bus. of a look at him to catch this point*.

ALF. More homelike —

TOM (*eagerly*). So it is!

ALF. (*to c., back to audience, surveying the room*). Lodgers will have the use of this big drawing-room, with the conservatory and large front windows commanding a view of the park. (*Pointing to front for these things.*) Nothing like it. All the comforts of home. I say, that's a good thing—don't forget it. Give it to 'em strong, Tom.

TOM (R. C.) Yes, sir. Give 'em what, sir?

ALF. (L. C.). That idea—it sounds well. All the comforts of home.

TOM. Quite right, sir. (*Aside.*) I'll go an' paint it on to the bottom of that there bill—"All the comforts of home."

ALF. (*going up and looking in door up L. C.*). Now, Tom, about prices. This room has an alcove adjoining.

TOM (R. of ALFRED, *up stage*). Yes, sir.

ALF. Five pound, ten.

TOM (*repeating to himself joyfully*). Fi pun, ten.

ALF. (*up L. C.; about to write it down in book*). I'll put it down.

TOM (R. of ALFRED. *Sudden yell, and bus. of seizing ALFRED'S right arm*). No! don't ye do it—oh, it's worth it—it's worth it!

ALF. Keep quiet. I'm only going to put it down in this book.

TOM (*sheepishly—after staring an instant*). Oh! I thought ye was a-goin' to put the price down.

[ALFRED *goes to door R. 3, followed by TOM*.

ALF. Here are two very good rooms.

TOM. Very good rooms, very go —

[ALFRED *turns quickly. TOM stops suddenly*.

ALF. Three windows.

TOM. 'Three an' a 'alf, sir — you didn't count that there thing. (*Pointing to transom over door.*)

[*READY* knock, and noise of falling furniture and throwing of beds.

ALF. That's nothing.

TOM. Nothing! It's worth ten bob extra at least, sir.

ALF. What possible use is the thing?

[*READY* SMYTHE, to enter up R.

TOM. Use, sir? Can't the parties as lodges there stand on a chair or table an' git a beautiful prospect of w'at's a-goin' on in this here drorin'-room?

ALF. Never thought of that. (*Amused.*) I'll slap on the ten bob, and call it seven guineas.

TOM (*bus. ; partly aside*). An' I gits half, oh!

ALF. See here! There are no beds in some of these rooms.

TOM (*as if to start*). I'll git 'em, sir.

ALF. Where?

TOM (*on point of starting*). Down the street.

[*ALFRED* makes a spring, and grabs TOM by collar.
Tableau.

ALF. (R. C.). I say — this sort of thing won't do, you know. Bring some down from up-stairs.

TOM (L. C.). Yes, sir. (*Bounds off up R., and up stair-way L.*)

ALF. We won't let the rooms up there until these are taken. Now, let me see — I must roost down here where I can keep an eye on the things. I'll take this room (R. 2 E.) — it's the smallest of the lot.

TOM (*calling from above*). Mr. Hastings! W'ich o' these here beds 'll I fetch down?

ALF. I'll go and look at them. (*EXIT up R. and L., and up the stairs.*)

[*Timid knock several times. ENTER* VICTOR SMYTHE, door up R. *He looks into room cautiously.*

SMYTHE (*near door*). At last — at last I am here — in the very house where she lives — under the same roof that shelters her! I can scarcely realize it! It (*hand on heart, etc., as if its palpitation hurt him*), it is all like a — a dream — a dream!

[*Tremendous bang of falling furniture overhead.*

SMYTHE *jumps in alarm, and scuds down R.*

TOM (*up-stairs*). Ge-whiffles!

SMYTHE. What was that! (*Hand on heart, etc.*) Every noise alarms me, for she said I must be very cautious. She must have sent every one out of the way — no one even to answer the door. That was so thoughtful of her. Now, if I can only get her to consent, and to intercede for me with Emily, I shall be the happiest man in the whole universe. And — she has already promised it. I suppose I ought to let her know I am here — she — she must be about somewhere. (*Goes up, and partly off up R., looking about.*) Oh — my heart seems to almost —

[*Two large feather beds and blankets fall on SMYTHE from above, up R. SMYTHE screams out in alarm as he falls half buried among them. TOM rushes down the stairs and falls to L. of SMYTHE; faces SMYTHE just as he is rising from among the bedding, ready to throw bolster.*

TOM (*rising*). That was odd, now, wasn't it?

SMYTHE (*rising from under bed*). Yes — it was a little odd. But no matter.

TOM (*glancing critically at the bedding*). No — there ain't no pertickler harm done, sir.

SMYTHE. I knocked several times — but as no one answered, I just looked in.

TOM. Quite right, sir. I'll attend to you in just a minute. (*Rushes up R., and drags bedding down across stage toward door L. 2, upsetting chairs, tables, etc.*)

SMYTHE (*following*). But I just wanted to see — (*Steps on blanket and is tripped by it. Bus. with tables, etc.*)

TOM (*dragging things*). You can see 'em in a minute, sir. We're just a-puttin' the beds in. (*EXIT' L. 2.*)

[SMYTHE *watches TOM's bus. in astonishment. Hand to heart. Wipes brow, etc.*

SMYTHE. This is one of the servants. What shall I say to him? How — how can I be cautious? And yet she said "be cautious, or you will spoil all."

[TOM *runs in at door L. 2.*

TOM. Now, sir — ha, ha! (*Bus.*) I suppose you saw it?

SMYTHE (R. ; *uncertainly*). Oh, yes; I — I saw it.

TOM (L. ; *to himself*). He saw it! He saw that there bill with "All the Comforts of Home" writ on it. That's w'at fetched 'im.

SMYTHE. I beg your pardon — but I'm afraid I've made a mistake.

TOM (*quickly; alarmed*). Oh, no, you hain't!

[SMYTHE *startled. Backs up toward door up R.*
Won't you look at the rooms? (*Invitingly.*)

SMYTHE (*uncertainly*). Wh — what rooms?

[*A bolster falls from above, up R.* SMYTHE, *startled still more, runs down R.*

TOM (*runs quickly up R., and calls up stairway*). Say, you don't want to heave down no more o' them fur a minute — I'm a-waitin' on a customer.

SMYTHE (R. C. ; *aside*). A — customer! A cus —

TOM (L. C. ; *down to SMYTHE quickly*). Now, sir, just have a look at 'em. They're simply entrancin'.

SMYTHE. I — I would like to speak to your employer, if you please.

TOM (L. C.). Sorry — but ye can't just now, unless you yell up them stairs. [*READY ALFRED, to enter up R.*

SMYTHE (R. C. ; *cautiously; mysteriously*). I alluded to the mistress of the house.

TOM. Well, we ain't got as fur as that yet. But the lodgin's —

SMYTHE. How's that! Surely, I have always seen your master in company with a lady.

TOM. Quite likely, sir — an' so have I. But it don't follow as 'e's married to 'er, just from that.

SMYTHE. Not married? Not —

TOM. No, sir — not by no means. But these here lodgin's is —

SMYTHE. Great Heaven! (*Hand to brow, etc.*) Why, this — this is horrible — and I loved the daughter — I — Great Heaven! Where would I have got to had you not opened my eyes? Here! (*Gives TOM money.*) 'Take this! Let me go! (*Starts off door up R.*) Let me go! (*EXIT, door up R.*)

[*READY knock R. U. D. TOM, up at D. R., stares after SMYTHE an instant. Glances at the money in his hand, then throws the bolster off R. 3 E., and meets ALFRED as he comes down from above.*

TOM. That there individual ain't had enough sleep lately.

ENTER ALFRED, coming down stairway up R.

ALF. (*L.; stopping on stairs as he descends.*) Well — have you captured a lodger?

TOM (*R.*). The man was clean out of his head.

[*ALFRED and TOM advance together.*

ALF. What did he do? (*Comes down and into room.*)

TOM. He inquired for the lady of the house.

ALF. What! [*READY DABNEY, to enter up R.*

TOM. Mebbe it was howin' to them beds fallin' on 'im.

ALF. Great Heavens, Tom! He has escaped us.

TOM. Eh?

ALF. Victor Smythe.

TOM. Ge-whiffles!

[*Both rush up into room up L. C. Throw up window and look out.*

ALF. (*going up L.*). And I promised to receive him!

TOM. I'll go and drag him back, sir! (*Starts R.*)

ALF. Here! Stop! Somebody's just going in at the door! [*Both look around back to R. as if at outside of house-door.*]

TOM (*looking out*). It's the same party, sir. He's comin' back for somethin'.

ALF. He'll get it, too. (*Coming down.*)

TOM (*down with ALFRED into room*). That's what he will, sir!

ALF. (*going R.*). Quick! Stand by the door here!

TOM. We won't make no mistake this time.

[*ALFRED and TOM quickly stand each side of door up R., ready to pounce upon SMYTHE. Knocking on door up R., from outside, several times. ALFRED and TOM signal each other to be ready.*]

ENTER CHRISTOPHER DABNEY, up R., quietly and carefully. He turns to close door, so that his back is toward ALFRED and TOM. ALFRED and TOM suddenly jump upon him ferociously. Both shout or exclaim on climax.

ALF. and TOM. Now we've got you! Throttle him! (*Etc.*) [*DABNEY gives cry of terror; they drag him quickly down.*]

ALF. Now, give it to him! } (*Together.*)

TOM. Bang his nose for him! }

TOM (*alone; seeing DABNEY*). Stop! [*Both stop.*]
This ain't him at all!

ALF. (*L. C.*). Oh, the deuce!

[*DABNEY, C., gasps and gurgles, overcome with terror.*]
Beg your pardon, sir — all a mistake!

TOM (*R. C.*). Yes — you're the wrong man! It warn't your fault, though!

ALF. (*L. C.*). Very sorry it occurred.

DABNEY (*C.*). Gi — gi — (*motions*). A chair!

ALF. and TOM. Yes, sir! (*They let go of DABNEY. He sinks. They catch him again. Repeat bus. TOM manages to*

get chair to him from behind table R. They seat him in it with some difficulty, C. Bus.)

DAB. Oh — thank you! (*Sits C.*)

TOM (*R. ; absent-mindedly*). An' I gits half!

ALF. (*L.*). It was too bad; by Jove, it was!

DAB. (*C.*). Oh — never mind, sir! I was taken somewhat by surprise — you — the — oh! The fact is, I am a very nervous man. (*Shakes head sadly.*) Dreadfully nervous. Sometime you shall know why —

ALF. Yes — some other time. (*To TOM.*) A glass of water — quick!

TOM. Yes, sir.

DAB. Sometime — (*TOM brings glass of water from table up stage.*)

ALF. (*taking it*). Have a little water, sir!

[DABNEY wobbles nervously in chair.

TOM. Have another chair!

DAB. Thanks — there on my temples.

[ALFRED wets DABNEY'S temples with the water.

TOM (*bus.*). A little on the bald spot, sir? (*Rubs bald spot on DABNEY'S head, and about to pour water from pitcher on his head.*)

DAB. (*bus.*). Don't! don't! don't! (*Bus.*)

[TOM stops, alarmed.

For Heaven's sake, don't rub anything there — friction in that locality sets me all on edge!

TOM. Quite right, sir. (*Goes up R. with the pitcher and tumbler, and returns to R. of DABNEY.*)

DAB. (*to ALFRED*). I seem to feel better now.

ALF. Very glad, I assure you.

DAB. (*looking at ALFRED*). 'Hem — yes — er. (*Rises.*) Good-morning!

[TOM puts back the chair to same place behind table, R. C.

ALF. How d'ye do? [*READY dogs and barking, L. H.*

DAB. You have — lodgings to let here?

ALF. and TOM (*together; TOM turning quickly to DABNEY*).
Yes! Yes, sir!

ALF. Charming lodgings.

TOM. Can't be beat.

ALF. (*crosses in front of DABNEY, and pushes TOM aside.*
TOM *goes round on DABNEY'S L.*). Will you look at them,
sir?

TOM. Yes — just take one look, that's all!

[ALFRED motions TOM to be quiet.

(*L.; aside.*) An' I gits half!

DAB. (C.). Yes — I — give me your arm, please. I'm
still a little —

ALF. (R.). Certainly.

TOM. Cer —

[*Bus. of ALFRED motioning TOM off. DABNEY takes*
ALFRED'S arm. They go L. TOM follows eagerly.

DAB. (*stopping*). I do hope it's quiet and tranquil here?

ALF. Perfectly quiet.

TOM. Peaceful as the tomb, sir.

DAB. Ugh! (*Gasps — drawing breath.*) Don't speak of
such things!

TOM (*quickly starting, as if to prevent another fit*). No,
sir! No — I take it back, sir!

DAB. No — er — children, I hope?

ALF. Not one.

DAB. No dogs? cats? parrots? pugs? puppies? cana-
ries, and such things?

TOM. Anythin' you want, sir, we'll have it cooked to
order! (*Bus.*)

ALF. Nothing of the kind, sir! (*Pulling out paper.*) You
can see by the rules, sir, how it is. 'Hem. (*Reads.*) "First:
rent payable strictly in advance. Second: children and dogs
must keep off the grass. Third: anything ordered will be
charged extra."

DAB. Ah — those are the rules? Well, I hope they will be enforced about the dogs, anyway.

[*They go* L. TOM *opens the door* L. 2.

ALF. Every time, sir!

TOM. If I once ketch a dog here, sir, I'll —

[DABNEY *goes into room* L. 3. *Bus. of poodles barking and jumping at his shins — pushed or tossed from outside* L. 3. DABNEY *yells and jumps about, and falls into chair holding feet in air.* TOM and ALFRED *shout, and bus. of catching poodles, etc. Keep on for laugh. Strike picture; TOM holding dogs; ALFRED trying to soothe DABNEY.*

ALF. (*shouting to TOM*). Take 'em up-stairs!

TOM. Quite right, sir! (*Rushes off up R., and up-stairs with poodles.*)

ALF. (*to DABNEY*). Don't be alarmed, I beg.

DAB. (*on ottoman*). Er — er — I can't — bear a dog!

ALF. (L. *of DABNEY*). Neither can I — they are the most repugnant creatures on the face of the earth to me. The question is, how the devil they came here. Are they yours?

DAB. (*rises to c.*). Mine! Mercy, no!

ENTER TOM, *up R.*

ALF. (L.). Thank Heaven for that! I cannot let lodgings to people who keep dogs!

TOM (R.). No (*shaking head*), we can't let no one in these here lodgin's as keeps dogs!

ALF. No matter how respectable they otherwise appear.

[DABNEY *looks helplessly from one to the other, shaking head to signify his innocence.*

But, as you say they are not yours, suppose you just glance at this room — it's much pleasanter than the other.

TOM. Yes.

[*They conduct DABNEY down* L. 2.

DAB. (*crosses to D. L. 2 E.*). Very well, I will look. But — are you quite sure —

[*They come to door of room L. 2, and open it. DABNEY bus. of shrinking, and lifting feet, fearing more dogs.*

ALF. Oh — quite, sir ! Allow me to look in first —

TOM. Allow me. (*Rushes in at L. 2, and out again.*)

[*ALFRED takes C.*

Not a vestige of one of 'em, sir — an' the ones as was in that there room, I dropped 'em off o' the roof o' the house.

DAB. (*sits again on ottoman; bus.; face contortion*). Er — oh — oh — don't — don't !

TOM (*getting round behind ottoman to R. of ALFRED*). There he goes again, sir !

ALF. (*C., R. of ottoman*). What seems to be wrong with you this time ?

DAB. (*on ottoman*). Oh — er — the horrible — idea ! Dropped off the roof ! (*Covers face.*)

TOM. ALFRED. OTTOMAN. DABNEY.

TOM (*to ALFRED*). It seems to give 'im a fit, sir, whichever way you put it.

DAB. Is this the apartment ? (*Looks off L. 2, while seated on ottoman.*)

ALF. Yes — I'm sure it'll please you.

DAB. Um ! Quiet, you say ?

TOM. Well, I should say ! The back yard is cat proof, and we've had the pavin' stones padded, so's to keep 'em from echoin' when any one whispers.

[*Both looking at him expectantly.*

DAB. What terms do you ask ? (*On ottoman.*)

TOM (*by chair L. of R. table; quickly*). Er — yes. What terms do we ask ?

ALF. (*C.*). With breakfast and attendance, six guineas.

TOM (*R.; aside*). An' I gits half ! (*Rubs the plush of chair absent-mindedly L. of R. table.*)

[*DABNEY, contortion of face. Shrinking. Draws up one leg, etc.*

DAB. (L., *on ottoman; breaking out*). Don't! don't! don't! (*Bus. of facial contortion.*)

TOM (R.). Look out! He's goin' into another o' them spasms.

ALF. (C.) The price is too high?

DAB. (L.; *motioning before he can speak*). Eh! Eh! Eh! For Heaven's sake, don't let him rub that plush — the sound drives me wild!

[ALFRED *motions* TOM away. TOM *retires up a little*
R. C.

I'll take the lodgings.

TOM (R. C.; *exultantly*). Oh!

DAB. (L.). A month in advance, I believe you said?
(*Pays ALFRED bills, etc.*)

[TOM *looks on from up stage, with delight.*

I can move in at once, can't I?

ALF. Certainly. }

TOM. O yes! } (*Together.*)

TOM. Sooner, sir, if you like! (*Looks at bills in ALFRED'S hands. Rubs his hands together.*)

[ALFRED *suddenly clutches* TOM. *Both look at DABNEY, but he does not notice bus.*

ALF. (*to* TOM). If you don't keep away, you'll ruin the whole business!

TOM. Quite right, sir! (*Goes up R., to stairs. Starts to bound up stairway, stumbles, and falls on stairs, catching by baluster.*)

[DABNEY and ALFRED *start in alarm.*

DAB. Oh!

TOM (*quickly on his feet*). An' I gits half! (*EXIT up the stairs, L.*)

[READY *knock, R.*

ALF. Calm yourself, sir — he's gone.

[READY LANGHORNE, *to enter up R.*

DAB. That person seems to affect my nerves painfully. I — I was born nervous, sir; an inheritance from my mother. My father was a musician, and I was put through a course to

follow the same profession, and soon got an appointment to teach in a large conservatory. That was my ruin. Imagine — imagine — if you can — with my nerves — thirty pianos, innumerable violins, several cornets, piccolos, and cellos,

[ALFRED *sits on arm of chair, L. of R. table, disgusted.* crowded together in a rather small building, until the air seemed to split and bellow and boil with a perfect frenzy of the discords of pandemonium. Then, sir, to put a finishing stroke, I was ambitious enough to write an opera — and it was accepted. I quarrelled with the conductor, the soloists, orchestra, chorus-singers, was insulted by the stage-manager, and finally hissed by the audience. (*Rises, and over to ALFRED.* *Buries face in hands.* *Last speech very fast.*)

[ALFRED *attempts to rise and get away.* DABNEY *puts him back on arm of chair again.*

Young man, let me advise you, if you want some cheerful occupation for your leisure hours, forge, counterfeit, burglarize, kill, rob, blow up everything with dynamite, commit suicide; but for Heaven's sake, don't write anything for the theatre!

[DABNEY *crosses in front of ALFRED to his R., and falls into armchair.* ALFRED *rises from arm, and takes L.*

ALF. No — I've no intention of doing so. (*Aside.*) An interesting case, this is. I'll make my first attempt at practice on him.

[*Knock outside, R.* TOM *rushes down-stairs, and opens door up R.* DABNEY *shrinks on hearing the rush.* ALFRED *soothes him.*

DAB. (*in armchair*). Oh, dear! What is that rushing and jumping about?

ALF. (C.). Nothing, sir, I assure you.

[*Bus. of soothing, etc.*

ENTER JUDSON LANGHORNE, *door up R.* *Very much of a swell; carries a small cane; red or tan*

gloves; dudish manners, with some impertinence.

TOM *remains up* L.

LANGHORNE (*coming down* L. C.). Aw! Mawning! How de do? Lodgings to let heah?

ALF. (R. C.). Ah — yes.

LANG. (L. C.). Yaas. (*Twirls his cane.*) Ha, ha! I read your bill —

ALF. That's all right, sir — it was put there to read. "All the Comforts of Home."

LANG. (L. C.). Aw, yes — elegantly furnished lodgings — all the comforts of home. Nice ideah — really — ha, ha!

ALF. (C., *to* TOM, *who is up* L.). You attend to the gentleman, Thomas.

TOM. (*down* L. *of* LANGHORNE). Yes, sir. This way, sir! The most excruciatingly elegant apartinent as ever you seen in your life lays right here! (TOM *rushes* LANGHORNE *up* L. C.)

LANG. Aw, don't say! Haw, haw!

TOM. Yes, I do say! Haw, haw!

[*EXEUNT* TOM *and* LANGHORNE, *door up* L. C.]

DAB. (*seated in armchair, R.*). I hardly like the way that young man flourishes about with his cane. (*Shows nervousness.*)

ALF. Don't believe he'll continue it long, sir. It would exhaust him too much.

DAB. Do you think so?

ENTER LANGHORNE, *followed by* TOM, *up* L.

LANG. (*up at* D. L. C.) I rather like the box, deah boy, and I think I'll take it.

TOM. Quite right, dear boy. (*Goes quickly down* L. *of* ALFRED, *who turns to him, so that* DABNEY *will not hear.*) He's took it, sir!

ALF. Here — you attend to this one. See about his luggage. (*Goes up to* LANGHORNE.)

TOM. Yes, sir. (*Goes to* DABNEY. *Coming suddenly*

at his L. side, and speaking in his ear.) Where shall I git it, sir?

ALFRED. LANGHORNE.

TOM.

TABLE. DABNEY.

R.

L.

DAB. (*start bus.*). Ugh! (*Contortion of feature bus.*) Don't, don't — don't scream in my ear like that.

TOM (*crosses round behind table, and gets down R. of DABNEY; to DABNEY*). I was a-askin' about your luggage, sir.

DAB. I'll give you directions, and you must be, oh, so careful! (*DABNEY and TOM continue talking in pantomime across the table.*)

TOM. TABLE. DABNEY. .

LANG. (*coming down L. C., and kneeling on one knee on ottoman, L.*). Judson Langhorne — yaas, deah boy; ha, ha, ha! I suppose I have the pleasure of addressing the — aw — lörd of the — aw — castle. (*Bus., whirl cane, etc.*)

[DABNEY *shrinks, and dodges slightly.*

ALF. (C.). To some extent, sir. I understand you have decided to take the apartment.

LANG. Yaas — aw — yaas. I'll take it — and I want to go right in, if you don't mind.

ALF. Go in just when you please, sir, and stay in as long as you please. We're free and easy here.

LANG. Aw — free and easy — that suits me chawmingly, deah boy!

LANGHORNE.

TOM. TABLE. DABNEY. ALFRED. OTTOMAN.

R.

L.

[READY noise L. H.

ALF. But the lodgings, I regret to say, are not free —

[LANGHORNE *looks at ALFRED.*

— although they may be easy.

LANG. (*laughing boisterously*). No — of course not ! Haw, haw !

ALF. And our rule is a month in advance.

LANG. (*sudden drop*). Aw — yaas.

ALF. You grasp the idea, of course ?

LANG. Yaas — I grasp — but — (*bright idea*). Aw — can you change me a fifty-pound note ? (*Hand in pocket.*)

ALF. Oh, yes.

LANG. (*stops, paralyzed*). You can !

ALF. Certainly — send out, and have the change for you in two minutes.

LANG. Aw ! (*Much relieved.*) Aw, no ! Couldn't think of troubling you so much, deah boy. No hurry at all. (*Goes up to door L. C.*) I'll remain right here ; and when you have the change handy, let me know. (*EXIT into room up L. C., and closes doors.*)

ALF. Another one ! By Jove, the business is flourishing !

[DABNEY *bus. of gymnastic exercises in explaining things to TOM. TOM imitating him, as if trying to get the idea.*

What the deuce is he up to now ?

DAB. Now, don't forget the soda-powders, dumb-bells, rowing-machine, and sponges.

TOM. Quite right, sir.

[LANGHORNE *sings a scale unsuccessfully outside, up L., in loud voice. All listen.*

DAB. (*rises ; starts with shriek*). Ah — stop it ! Stop it ! I can't stand it ! (*Bus. of dancing about, but must not overdo it.*)

ALF. Oh, the devil ! (*Goes up to LANGHORNE'S door.*)

TOM. Ge-whiffles !

[DABNEY *sits again. LANGHORNE begins to sing, "Down in a Coal Mine."*

DAB. Horrors ! What's that he's singing ?

TOM (*up to ALFRED*). "Down in a Coal Mine."

[DABNEY *stops his ears.*

All the Comforts of Home.

ALF. Hang the coal mine! Go and tell him there's a strike. Stop his howling, someway.

TOM. Yes, sir. I'd do anything in the world for you, sir. (TOM goes up, and EXIT up L. C., closing door. Bus. of singing as he goes. Sudden bus. of stop, R., off. Singing stops.)

DAB. Has — has he stopped? (Fingers out of ears cautiously.)

ALF. Yes, sir; it's all right now.

[Noise of banging furniture outside, up L. ALFRED and DABNEY start and turn.

ENTER TOM, up L. C., with bloody face, limping, etc.

TOM (down L. C.; after the laugh). Oh, I'd do anything in the world for you, sir!

ALF. (C.). What did the fellow do?

TOM. Ge-whiffles! Can't ye see?

ALF. (starting toward up L.). Let me have a word with him.

TOM (stopping ALFRED). No, sir! Don't ye do it! I've just had a word with 'im — an' it ain't encouragin'. (TOM wipes blood from face. He must not fail to remove it.)

DAB. The fellow is terrible! I shall not stay. (Starts to go up C.)

[ALFRED and TOM both down, remonstrating with DABNEY. They bring him down.

ALF. (L.). But, my dear sir —

TOM (R.). We'll fix 'im for ye. [READY knock R.

DAB. (C.). But his singing — (Contortion of horror.)

ALF. Stop a moment! An uncle of mine, who also is nervous, had a new thing the other day — an audiphone — just what you want. You put it in your ears, and you can't hear a sound! (Looks about on table, etc.)

TOM. Yes, sir; you couldn't hear the last trump ef it was ter be played!

ALF. Here it is. (Finds a box on desk, L. Opens. Hands

DABNEY *two small articles for the ears.*) There, sir, try it — wonderful!

TOM (R.). Wonderful!

[READY FIFI and MAID, to enter up R.

DAB. (C.). Dear me, I'm so nervous! Is this the way?

[ALFRED L., TOM R.

ALF. and TOM. Yes! Yes!

[DABNEY puts audiphones in his ears, and looks about.

ALF. (L.). How do you like it?

[DABNEY looks at ALFRED and TOM, unconscious of having been addressed.

TOM (R.). He says, how do you like it?

DAB. (C.). Eh? [ALFRED L., TOM R.

ALF. and TOM (together). How do you like it?

DAB. (looks front, delighted). Ha, ha, ha! I cannot hear a sound!

TOM. You're a broken-down old jackass.

DAB. (joyfully). Thanks — a thousand thanks! Perfectly splendid! (Goes L.) I won't go. I'll stay. (Crosses to L. 2 E.) Ha, ha, ha! (EXIT, L. 2 E.)

ALF. By Jove, that was a lucky thought!

TOM. Yes, sir; but we'll want a lot of 'em if that there feller's goin' to keep up his singin' "Down in the Coal Mine."

[Knock outside, up R.

ALF. The door, Tom.

TOM. Yes, sir. (Bounds up R., and opens door.)

ALF. I wonder what kind of a creature we'll get now!

ENTER FIFI ORITANSKI up R., followed by her maid, and ushered in with great ceremony by TOM, who backs down near ALFRED, and stands admiring her. FIFI is dressed very stylishly, but is not over dressed, and has the manner of a lady who knows the world pretty well. Bus. of ALFRED bowing, etc. TOM also bowing in sympathy with ALFRED, without knowing it.

FIFI (R. C.). You have apartments — furnished — I believe?

ALF. (L. C.). Yes, madam. (*Aside.*) By Jove, she's pretty!

TOM (L., *aside*). Yes, by Jove, she's pretty — ha, ha!

MAID.

FIFI. ALFRED. TOM.

ALF. (*to TOM*). Shut up!

TOM (*starts*). I said she was —

[*Threatening sign from ALFRED.*

Quite right, sir. (TOM goes up stage rather dejectedly, and lingers, watching. To himself absent-mindedly.) An' I gits half!

FIFI (C.). I am looking for a pretty front room, and a smaller one adjoining for my maid.

ALF. (*goes to door L. 3, and opens it*). Oh, yes, with maid adjoining. Do you think this would suit you at all?

[FIFI crosses to L., and looks off L. 3.

FIFI. Oh, charming! Why, it's the cosiest place I've seen anywhere.

TOM (R. of ALFRED; *unable to repress himself; stepping forward*). Right you are, miss — it's a —

ALF. (L. of TOM; *quickly, to TOM*). Sh! — (*Bus.*)

[TOM starts, and retires silenced.

ALF. Sh! —

TOM (*aside; sotto voce*). Oh, I'd do anything in the world for you, sir!

[FIFI has turned, surprised.

ALF. Don't be alarmed, miss! He's harmless.

[TOM gives ALFRED a look. Turns and goes up R.

FIFI (L., *coming down*). The apartment is lovely. But this room — whose is this?

ALF. (*down C.*). This is a drawing-room which is for the use of all. We thought it would be a pleasant innovation.

TOM (*up R.*). All the comforts o' —

[*Bus.* ALFRED stops TOM.

FIFI (L.). Oh, what a charming idea! But I'm afraid such apartments will be far too expensive for me.

ALF. (C.). 'Hem! [TOM comes down a little, listening.
Oh, no — only — six guineas.

FIFI. Oh!

ALF. Er — five pounds.

TOM (*down to ALFRED, R., quickly*). No, sir! No, sir!
It was six quid, sir. Six quid! (*Bus. Alarmed.*)

ALF. (C., *shaking TOM off*). Hold your tongue!

TOM (R. C., *aside; sotto voce; sadly*). An' I gits half!

FIFI (L.). My, that isn't high at all!

TOM (*aside*). No, it ain't!

FIFI. I will take the rooms, if you please.

ALF. (*bowing*). Delighted, I assure you.

FIFI. There's my card. (*Takes out pretty case. Hands ALFRED card. Turns and looks off L. again.*)

ALF. Ah! Thank you. (*Absently fondles card to breast.*)
I — I — 'hem —

FIFI (*turning*). Well?

ALF. Yes — that is — I hope you will like it here.

FIFI (*graciously*). Ah — how could I help it — such a sweet place — and such a charming landlord!

ALF. and TOM (*together*). Ah!

TOM (*aside, exultantly*). An' I gits half!

FIFI (*to maid*). Gretchen, have my things brought over here. [READY knock R.

GRETCHEN (*up R.*). Yes'm. (*EXIT, R. U. D.*)

[READY BENDER, JOSEPHINE, and EVANGELINE,
to enter up R.

FIFI. I suppose I can move right in?

ALF. and TOM (*together*). Oh, yes!

FIFI. You see, if I went, you might forget and rent the rooms to somebody else. (*Laughs, and EXIT at L. 3.*)

[ALFRED L. C., TOM R. C.

ALF. and TOM (*eagerly*). Oh, no! (*ALFRED and TOM recover, and look at each other.*)

ALF. (*breaking and coming forward a little, L.*). By Jove, she's a beauty! Such an air of aristocracy! Wonder what her name — oh! (*Looks at card.*) "Fifi Oritanski!" Charming name!

TOM (R.). Ain't it divine!

ALF. An angel — such grace — and her eyes — did you notice her eyes, Tom?

TOM. I noticed one on 'em, sir.

ALF. (L. C.). One of them! What do you mean?

TOM (R. C.). It was all as I had a call on — seein' as I gits half.

ALF. Oh — ha, ha — I forgot that! And, by the way (*takes out bills and offers TOM part of them*), here's your share of what I got from the old duffer in there.

TOM (*stoutly*). No, sir!

ALF. It's your share, I say.

TOM. No, sir! (*Shakes head.*) I wouldn't take it on no account. It ain't the money I cares for — it's only the bare idea of gittin' half. No, sir!

ALF. Oh, well, I'll settle with you some other time. Come, we must finish up-stairs. (*ALFRED and TOM start up R., quickly.*) We may let apartments up there yet.

[*EXEUNT ALFRED and TOM up-stairs, up R.*]

TOM (*as they go*). Quite right, sir!

[*Pause. Knock on door up R. several times.*]

ENTER, door up R., THEODORE BENDER, JOSEPHINE BENDER, and EVANGELINE BENDER. They look about for some one as they come in.

BENDER. This is the place, I suppose.

JOSEPHINE. Why didn't you ring the bell?

BEND. I couldn't find any bell.

EVANGELINE (*timidly*). Papa, wasn't the bill on the house next to this? [*They come down into room.*]

BEND. No, no!

JOS. (*coming down R.; sinking into chair R. of R.*)

table). Theodore, it's outrageous! I cannot walk another step. [READY DABNEY, to enter L. 2 E.

BEND. (*coming down c.*). Whose fault is it, I'd like to know? You are never suited. I have said from the first we ought to have spent our few weeks in town at a hotel. There is one at the next corner. (*Sits L. of R. table.*)

[EVANGELINE *surveying the room c., demurely.*

JOS. That will do, Theodore. I know perfectly well why you prefer a hotel. [EVANGELINE *sits back of table.*

I've noticed how you — Evangeline, you needn't cock up your ears when your father and mother are discussing family affairs. [EVANGELINE *rises and examines pictures which hang on wall at R.*

I've noticed that you were much more interested in the attractiveness of the waiting-maids than in the comfort of the room.

BEND. Oh, Josephine, my dear!

JOS. In addition to that, the expenses are simply scandalous.

BEND. Well, well, we need not mind a few pounds more or less. We've feathered our nest pretty well.

JOS. Yes; because I keep my thumb on your hardly earned shillings — and I intend to do so still.

BEND. (*sighs*). I know it.

JOS. Is there a living soul in this house?

BEND. (*rises and crosses to L.*). Ah, here's some one at last!

ENTER DABNEY *from his room at L. 2. Goes up c., delighted, not observing the BENDERS, and down to c.*

DAB. (*c., walking up and down in great glee*). An excellent invention! I can hear absolutely nothing! (*Comes c.*)

JOS. (*R. c.; meeting DABNEY, c.*). Sir, we have come to look at the —

[DABNEY *stops and looks at her. READY TOM and ALFRED, to enter up R.*

All the Comforts of Home.

BEND. (L., *coming on L. of DABNEY*). We want to see the apartment, sir. [DABNEY *looks blank*, C.

JOS. (R. C.). Why, he must be hard of hearing !

[BENDER L., JOSEPHINE R. C., EVANGELINE R.

BEND. }
 JOS. } (*together ; coming close to DABNEY ; loud voice*).
 EVAN. } We want to look at the rooms.

DAB. (C.). Did somebody make a remark ?

EVANGELINE. JOSEPHINE. DABNEY. BENDER.

R.

L.

[READY LANGHORNE and FIFI *to sing outside* L.

Cello crash L. 2 E.

JOS. (*gesturing, etc.*). Rooms ! Rooms ! Rooms ! (*Etc.*)

[BENDER *joins in the effort*. *Motions* EVANGELINE.

She joins also in a sweet, high key.

EVANGELINE R. JOSEPHINE R. C. BENDER L.

JOS. }
 BEND. } (*together*). Rooms ! Rooms ! Rooms ! (*They*
 EVAN. } *stop, out of breath.*)

DAB. (C.; *after looking at them an instant*). Delightful !
 Heavenly ! Ha, ha ! (*Dances a little.*)

[JOSEPHINE, EVANGELINE, and BENDER *move away*
each side, alarmed.

EVAN. Mamma, what's the matter with him ?

JOS. He's crazy — don't go near him, child. Come !
 Come ! [JOSEPHINE and EVANGELINE *move up stage in alarm.*

ENTER TOM and ALFRED, *rushing down-stairs,*
up R.

ALF. For Heaven's sake, get him away ; he'll ruin the
 whole business !

TOM. Quite right, sir ! (TOM *darts across to L., and hustles*
 DABNEY *off into his room at L. 2, going in with him.*)

[ALFRED *down, and bowing, etc., to the BENDER fam-*
ily, as if nothing were wrong.

ALF. (C.). It was all a mistake, madam, I assure you.

I am the proprietor of the house. [READY crash off

L. 2 E.

EVANGELINE R.

JOSEPHINE R. C.

BENDER L. C.

JOS.

EVAN.

BEND.

} (together). Oh !

[READY TOM and DABNEY, to enter L. 2 E.

ALF. (C.). That was merely a nervous gentleman who is quite deaf.

BEND. Yes — we noticed it.

ALF. (aside). By Jove ! What a lovely girl !

JOS. Hum ! We came to look at the lodgings, sir, which you advertise.

ALF. Ah ! Yes ? (Expectantly.)

JOS. But I'm afraid you haven't very quiet people here.

ALF. Let me assure you, madam, they are so quiet that it is like a Sunday-school.

[JUDSON LANGHORNE suddenly sings outside, up L. C.,
"Home, Sweet Home," in loud voice. All start.

JOS. Mercy ! What is that dreadful noise ?

ALF. (aside). Confound the fellow — he will make a beggar of me !

[FIFI suddenly starts in, outside L. 3, practising the scales.

MUSIC. — Lively music *pp.* ; continue to the end of Act, growing louder for bus. near end.

BEND. (pricking up his ears). Ah ! A woman's voice !
(Starts toward L. 3.)

JOS. Theodore !

[BENDER stops suddenly. Noise of banging and crashing outside L. 2 E. All start, and look about alarmed.

ENTER TOM, rushing on from L. 2.

TOM (calls). Help ! Help !

[Outside L. 2, just before his entrance.

Help! Oh, Mr. Hastings! The man in there has got them audiphones down in his ears, an' he can't git 'em out! He's smashin' everythin' to smithereens! [READY curtain.

NOTE. — *Keep music and all noises down, so that this speech will not fail to be heard, as it is very important. Noise of banging furniture and crashing glass outside L. 2. All start, alarmed. Bus.*

ENTER DABNEY, rushing on L. 2, in agony, dancing about, overturning furniture, and calling for help at the top of his voice. JOSEPHINE and EVANGELINE scream, and run hither and thither to R. of R. table. BENDER dodges, alarmed, also calling out. TOM and ALFRED hold DABNEY by his coat, but the garment is torn and ripped.

DAB. Help! Pull 'em out! Help! It'll be the death of me! [RING curtain.

EVANGELINE.	TABLE.	BENDER	ALFRED	DABNEY	TOM
JOSEPHINE.		<i>in chair.</i>	<i>holding Dabney's coat-tail.</i>	<i>kneeling, back to audience.</i>	<i>on ottoman, holding the other tail of Dabney's coat.</i>

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE. — Same as Act I. Some small changes should be made in position of furniture, etc., merely as if a few days had passed, and the house had been used. *READY LANGHORNE and TOM to enter up R.*

MUSIC. — Lively comedy music to take curtain up. Stop on entrance of LANGHORNE.

ENTER JUDSON LANGHORNE, door up R., from outside, in haste, as if he had been pursued by some one. He closes door with bang, and stands a moment, breathing hard. Soon he strolls down into room, recovering himself.

LANGHORNE. What a dooce of a chase the fellow gave me ! (*Wipes brow carefully. Twirls mustache.*) Upon my soul, I had no ideah my tailor could run so. He ought to enter for one of the — aw — what do you call — it's at the Agricultural Hall. Lucky thing I threw him off the scent ; for if he found out I'm heah — dooce take it — I'd have to move again.

ENTER TOM, door up R., with tray of breakfast things.

Look heah !

TOM (*who was crossing with tray, stops suddenly*). Same to you, sir.

LANG. (L. C.). In case any one should honor me with a call during the course of the next few days — I'm — aw — not at home. (*Turns, and goes up to his door.*)

[*READY bells up R. and L. 2 E., and also the VOICE.*

(*Turning.*) You'd better remember it too, or I'll cut off your ears.

TOM (R.). Quite right, sir ; and when you undertake it, you'll find as the ears has got somethin' to say on the subject. [*READY* ALFRED, *to enter* R. 2 E.]

LANG. (*bullying*). What—you dare to—(*as if to strike with cane*). [*TOM threateningly draws back the breakfast-tray.*]

TOM (R.). Look out, or you'll git a dose of coffee an' eggs what'll refresh ye wonderful ! You took me by surprise the other day, when ye flung that there furnitoor about ; but ye better lay low now, ef ye know what's good for ye.

LANG. (L.). Such—aw—impertinence—from a servant !

TOM (R.). I'd respectfully inform you as I ain't no servant. No, sir ! (*Swelling up with dignity.*) I'm in on it.

LANG. In on it ?

TOM (*turning grandly*). Yes—in on it. (*Proudly.*) I gits 'alf. [*EXIT* LANGHORNE *into his room up* L. C. *Bell rings violently in* DABNEY'S room, *outside* L. 2.]

(*TOM suddenly drops from his grand manner.*) Comin', sir—comin' ! (*Starts down towards* L. 2.)

[*Bell rings from upstairs, up* R.]

(*TOM stops—starts up* R.) There goes that up-stairs lodger, as always wants to know what time it is. (*Calls up-stairs.*) Well, sir !

VOICE (*above, up* R.). Won't somebody tell me what time it is ? [*Bell rings violently in* DABNEY'S room, *L. 2.*]

TOM (*starts down* L. 2). It's a quarter before—(*Breaks and starts* L.) Comin', sir—comin' !

[*Bell up-stairs, as before.*]

VOICE (*above*). I say, can't somebody tell me what time it is ?

TOM. Be there in a minit, sir. (*Starts to* D. L. 2.)

VOICE. Twenty minutes to what ?

ENTER ALFRED, *from door* R. 2.

ALF. Tom, hold on! (*To C.*)

[*READY bell again up R. and L. 2. TOM stops and meets ALFRED near C.*

Has she been out? [*TOM looks blankly at ALFRED.*
(*ALFRED glances R.*) Have you — have you seen her this morning?

TOM (*L. C.*). No, sir, I ain't. Who did you mean?

ALF. (*R. C.*). Why — the little — er (*motions R.*) — that is — Miss Bender.

TOM. Oh, yes, sir; I seen her.

ALF. (*eagerly*). Yes; did she — did she leave any word — any —

TOM. Oh, yes; I'd almost forgot — I —

[*Bell rings violently in DABNEY'S room, outside L. 2.*

Oh, Lord! Yes, sir! Coming! (*TOM starts L. 2.*)

ALF. But wait — I want to know — wait!

[*TOM stops. Bell rings up-stairs, up R.*

VOICE (*outside, up R., above*). Is anybody going to tell me what time it is, or not?

[*TOM starts up a little. Bell rings violently in DABNEY'S room, L. 2. READY bell again, L.*

TOM. Ge-Whiffles! Could you just tell that up-stairs man the time? If I don't give the musical galoot this here breakfast, he'll have one of them terrible spasms. (*TOM rushes off at L. 2, with tray.*)

ALF. (*C., going up*). Confound the up-stairs man! He's the worst nuisance in the lot. (*Calls up-stairs, up R.*) Did anybody speak up there?

VOICE (*up-stairs*). Yes, I spoke — Struthers.

ALF. Ah, I thought I heard your voice, Mr. Struthers. Did you want anything? ▸

VOICE (*up-stairs*). Want anything? My soul! I've been asking what time it is, at the top of my voice, for the past fifteen minutes. I want to set my watch.

ALF. Sorry you had so much trouble. It is now be-

tween a quarter-past ten and twenty minutes before two.
(ALFRED *comes forward with an air of triumph.*)

VOICE (*up-stairs, very distinctly*). Thanks. I was five minutes slow.

ALF. (*aside*). Well, by Jove! (*Comes down, looking longingly at door R. 3.*) It's useless. I can't do anything but watch for her — and think of her — and dream of her. The sweet little witch, with her roguish eyes! How shy she was at first; but when her charming timidity wore away — when she grew to have confidence in me — (*An ecstatic look; he sinks on chair. Sighs. Suddenly looks up.*) Great Heavens! What have I been thinking of all this time! (*Rises.*) Oh, this is outrageous! I didn't suppose the little darling would take everything I said in earnest, until I found I was taking it in earnest myself. I must pull up, confound me! I must let her know in some way of my engagement to Emily.

ENTER TOM L. 2., *hurrying on.*

TOM (C.). Say, since you've been a-doctorin' that cove in there, he's took on most singular.

ALF. (R., *seated*). I'll look in on him again, by and by.

TOM. Ef I was you, I wouldn't. Every time you look in he takes on worse. [*Bell rings in DABNEY'S room, L. 2.*

Yes, sir! Coming! (*TOM starts L.*) He'll git that bell wore out ef he goes on like this. (*Stops suddenly.*) Ge-Whiffles! (*Takes out note from pocket.*) I'd nearly forgot it again, sir. She told me to give it into your own hands, and I —

[READY BENDER, *to enter R. 3 E.*

ALF. (R., *snatches note*). What! (*Opens eagerly.*)

TOM (*aside*). There's one thing sure, an' that is that he's took clean off his feet.

[*Bell rings in DABNEY'S room, outside L. 2.*

Coming, sir — coming! (*Exit L.*)

ALF. (*absorbed in note — reads*). “Dear Mr. Hastings: Mamma and papa are going out this morning, but I have such a dreadful headache that I cannot go with them. I hope you

will not be alarmed about the headache, as it is one of the kind that comes on when I would rather have a call from some one I know than go to the Park." (ALFRED *laughs ecstatically, and kisses the note.*) "I have so much to tell you, and I hope you will be glad to see me. Your own Evangeline." (ALFRED *looks up ecstatically.*) "Your own Evangeline!" (*Kisses note again. Sudden revulsion. Starts to his feet.*) By Jove! Gone as far as this already! (*Walks about.*) Oh, see here, my boy, this sort of thing won't do! It won't do at all. (*Rises and crosses to D. up L.*)

ENTER BENDER R. 3, carrying pipe and bag of tobacco, etc. He looks at ALFRED a moment, holding door open behind him.

JOSEPHINE (*speaks outside R. 3*). Now, remember what I say!

BENDER (*speaking back through R. 3*). Yes, my love. (*Closes door quickly, with muttered blasphemy. Turns.*)

[ALFRED and BENDER facing each other.

Young man, I am about to give you a piece of advice.

ALF. (*L. C. ; smiles*). Kind, I'm sure!

BEND. (*R. C.*). Before you marry, ask your intended her opinion of the fragrant weed. She will tell you at that time that she adores it. Proceed at once to write this statement down in black and white, and make her sign it.

ALF. (*laughing*). Is that a necessary formality

BEND. It'll save you many unhappy hours. (*Glances nervously, R.*) You may now witness the result of my failure to procure such a document. (*Holds up pipe, etc.*) I am driven from home. Dressing gown and slippers must be abandoned in order to find a place outside for a soothing whiff.

ALF. Not outside. Right here, Mr. Bender.

BEND. (*pleased*). You allow it?

ALF. Certainly. "All the Comforts of Home," you know.

BEND. Yes; but that isn't a comfort (*bus.*) — of home (*bus.*) — according to my experience — ha, ha! (BENDER *lights pipe with great satisfaction. Chuckles. Bus. Smokes.*) I'd like to compliment you, Mr. Hastings.

ALF. How so?

BEND. You've got a way with you, sir, that affects my wife in a most extraordinary manner. (*Puffing.*)

ALF. You surprise me!

BEND. Really! Makes her almost amiable. (BENDER *starts suddenly, and looks at door R. 3.*)

[READY, *bell up R.*

ALF. (*laughing*). Oh, I'm sure she is always that.

BEND. (*dryly*). Are you? (*Puffs.*)

JOS. (*opening door, R. 3.*) Theodore!

BEND. Yes, my angel! What did you wish?

JOS. Oh, I only want to keep track of you, that's all. (*Closes door, R. 3.*)

[BENDER *motionless. Face impassive. Exchanges a glance with ALFRED. ALFRED amused. READY TOM to enter, L. 2 E.*

BEND. (*after above bus.*). That's all. Possibly you think it's a pleasure to be under police supervision.

ALF. (*laughingly*). But I'm afraid you give Mrs. Bender some reason for this distrust.

[BENDER *pleased. Takes pipe out of mouth. Eyes twinkle. He glances around.*

BEND. Well, I must confess that I have always been — 'hem — an admirer — a devoted admirer — of the fair sex. (*Rises and walks nearer to ALFRED.*) And I cannot say entirely without success. Ha, ha, ha! (*Laughs, and digs ALFRED in the ribs.*) [Both laugh.

ALF. Ha, ha! I begin to see.

BEND. Of course in our little town there isn't much latitude.

ALF. No; rather limited, I suppose.

BEND. Yes, decidedly. (*Glances R.*) Decidedly limited. But here in London I did hope to have a little romance or two.

ALF. And Mrs. B., I presume, is keeping the latitude down pretty low here?

BEND. Down to nothing, sir. [*ENTER TOM, L. 2.*

TOM (*crossing up to R.*). Now he's a-callin' fur camomile tea and a bottle of chloroform. (*Just going out, up R.*)

[*Bell rings up-stairs, up R.*
(*From door. Shouting up-stairs.*) Quarter-past eleven!
(*TOM rushes off door up R.*)

BEND. (*R. C.*). I say, what female voice did I hear a short time ago?

ALF. (*L. C.*). Oh, that was Miss Oritanski.

[*READY FIFI to enter, L. 3 E.*

BEND. Ah— er! Miss Oritanski lives in the house, then?

ALF. Oh, yes; her apartments are there — opposite yours. (*Amused at BENDER's eager interest.*)

BEND. Indeed! Such charming neighbors — and I didn't know it! I — ha, ha! (*Looks longingly at L. 3.*)

JOS. (*coming to door R. 3.*) Theodore, are you there?

BEND. (*starts visibly*). Eh — oh — yes, yes; I'm here! (*Grinds his teeth and mutters.*)

[*JOSEPHINE closes door, R. 3 E. ENTER TOM, door up R.*

TOM (*to C.*). Doctor, that there nervous galoot ordered a drink o' chloroform, an' them drug-shop chaps won't let me have it unless I gits an order.

ALF. (*L. C.*). I'll go and write you a prescription — one that 'll make him sleep for a month.

TOM. Yes, sir. Wish you would, sir.

ALF. Make yourself perfectly comfortable, Mr. Bender. (*Crosses to R. 2 E. EXIT R. 2 E., followed by TOM.*)

BEND. (*following a little way up R.*). Thanks, my boy, I'm perfectly comfortable (*turning front*), so long as Mrs. Bender doesn't come out. [*Door L. 3 opens.*

Ah, I really believe — Miss Oritanski is — ha, ha! (*Glances nervously R. 3, etc.*)

ENTER FIFI, L. 3.

Upon my soul, she's pretty as a picture! (*Chuckles. Delighted and anxious bus.*)

FIFI (*down L.; aside*). Dear me, what can I do? My dressmaker will not send the other costume unless I pay her bill to-day, and the management has refused to advance me another penny. (*Sits in front, and on ottoman L. C.*)

BEND. (*aside*). Wonder if I could venture to address her? (*Glances around toward his wife's door, R. 3.*) I'll chance it, anyhow. (*Takes a hasty survey of himself in a large mirror up R. Bus. of arranging tie or something. He comes down, with a slight embarrassment, and a trifle of anxiety as to door R. 3.*) Ah — ha — ha — Miss Oritanski, I believe!

[FIFI looks quickly around at BENDER.

I hope you won't take offence at my seeming presumption, but as I'm to some extent a neighbor of yours, I thought you might allow me to introduce myself.

FIFI (L. C.). Certainly — what name?

BEND. (R.). E — Bender — Theodore — Theodore Bender. And entirely and most devotedly at your service.

FIFI (*politely, but with a slight frigidity*). Very much pleased, I'm sure.

BEND. (*approaching her; gives a glance toward door, R. 3.*). I — 'hem — I am a retired — e — business man — from one of the provincial towns, and am spending a few weeks in London for pleasure, and — e — recreation — recreation. (*Smiles, etc. Bus. of glancing at door, R. 3.*)

FIFI (*aside; the dawn of a sudden idea shown by her eyes*). Retired! Then he's rich. (*Rises to L., and bows. Aloud.*) You cannot imagine how pleased I am at having such an agreeable neighbor. (*Sits again.*)

BEND. (*aside; chuckles*). She likes me! (BENDER lingers near R., occasionally looking nervously at his wife's door.)

[FIFI near L.

Are you here — for — e — recreation?

FIFI. Oh, dear, no! I'm not so fortunate as that. I have an engagement.

BEND. (C. ; *not understanding*). Oh — engagement?

FIFI (*on ottoman*). Yes. I am singing at the Opera Comique.

BEND. Opera Comique! [FIFI *nods demurely*.

(*Aside.*) An actress! (*Chuckles.*) The dream of my life has been to meet one, and here it is actually fulfilled. The dream of my life fulfilled — and (*sudden change*) — the dream of my wife in the next room.

FIFI. Won't you sit down, Mr. Bender.

BEND. Ah, thank you. (*He is about to accept the invitation, and starts toward FIFI as if to sit. He stops suddenly, and looks nervously at his wife's door, R. 3.*) Ahem — I — I believe I'd rather stand. (*With a longing look at the seat by FIFI's side.*) My doctor has ordered me to — e — take all the exercise I can.

FIFI. And won't he let you sit down? Dear me! How dreadfully you must suffer.

BEND. Yes — I suffer (*glances R.*) — more than I can tell. (*Aside.*) Oh! if we were only somewhere else! (*A thought.*) I wonder if I could? (*Goes to door, R. 3. Pause.*) I'll try it. Confound it, I'd try anything. (*He quietly turns key in door. Look of joy.*) Ha, ha! (*Chuckles.*) I've locked her in!

FIFI. Mr. Bender!

BEND. (*starts*). Eh — oh, yes! (*Goes toward FIFI with great relief evident in his manner.*) I was just — e — locking my door.

FIFI. I saw you were.

BEND. So many valuables in there — it's safer, you know.

FIFI. Yes. (*Nodding demurely.*) Safer to keep them there.

BEND. Yes, ha, ha! (*Laughs in an uncertain manner.*)

[FIFI *bursts into a merry laugh.*

(BENDER *laughs with her; then suddenly stops.*) 'Hem — e — perhaps we'd better not laugh quite so audibly.

FIFI. Perhaps not — the valuables might hear.

BEND. Ahem — yes, they might. (BENDER *about to sit by FIFI'S side, L. C., on ottoman.*)

FIFI (*rises*). What! disobeying the doctor's orders, Mr. Bender? (*Sits.*)

BEND. Oh — d — e — hang the doctor's orders! (*Sits R., on ottoman.*) Er — Miss Oritanski — I've been smoking here. If I'd known you were coming out —

FIFI. Don't speak of it, Mr. Bender. I like it.

BEND. (*rapturously; aside*). She likes it. (*Aloud.*) So you're singing at the Opera Comique? [FIFI *nods assent.*]
What — e — what part?

FIFI. In the new piece to-morrow, I'm Prince Vladimir.

BEND. Prince Vladimir! (*Draws a sigh of delight.*)
How perfectly — e — sweet you must look in the part of a prince.

FIFI. I'm going to try one of the costumes on this morning. Would you like to see it?

BEND. Like to — I — (*Sudden stop, and look at door R 3.*)
[FIFI *laughs lightly, amused.*]

It would delight me beyond words.

FIFI. There's only one obstacle.

BEND. (*bus. of looking R.*). I know it.

FIFI (*laughingly*). Oh, I don't mean the valuables.

BEND. What, another!

FIFI. Ah, Mr. Bender! I am afraid you don't know dress-makers.

BEND. Well, I've met — 'hem — a few.

FIFI. But not mine. Oh, she's a tyrant! Now, what do you think she has done to-day?

BEND. (*blinking in expectation of a horrible revelation*).
What has she done to-day?

FIFI. Refused to send my most important costume be-

cause there is a trifle due on the bill. Of course I shall send to the management and have it attended to, but the delay — and the insult! (*Rises to R. Walks indignantly.*) The humiliation!

BEND. (*rises and follows to C.*) Outrageous! (*Thinks.*) My dear young lady — would you consider it intrusive (*rises*) — if I — if — I asked the favor of — e — arranging this little matter?

FIFI (R.; *turning; feigned surprise*). You!

BEND. (C.). Ah — don't misconstrue me! It has been the dream of my life — to — e — do something for Art.

FIFI. Oh, how good you are! I feel that you are a friend. (*Impulsively holds out her hands.*)

[BENDER *eagerly kisses her hand*; FIFI *retreats quickly a step or two*. BENDER *bus. of glance R. 3, and of uncertain smile at FIFI, etc.*

Ah, I am afraid I have been too frank with you!

BEND. No, no, not at all! Not at all!

FIFI. And yet — it seems to me that I could trust you.

BEND. You could — you could!

FIFI (*crosses to L.*). But (*speaks doubtfully*) I'm dreadfully afraid it would hardly be right.

BEND. Yes, but —

FIFI. Well, I will put your friendship to the test. Wait just a moment, and I'll get the bill. (*EXIT' quickly, L. 3.*)

[*READY* JOSEPHINE, *to enter R. 3 E.*

BEND. (*delighted; chuckles; bus.*) Ha, ha! We're getting along charmingly. Charmingly! Ah (*walking*), I haven't forgotten all I knew. No! (*Shaking head in merriment, etc., and chuckling to himself. Comes before his wife's door R. 3, and stops; stands looking at it.*) And Josephine locked in too, ha, ha, ha! That wasn't bad, now — that wasn't half bad!

ENTER FIFI, L. 3, with a bill.

FIFI (L.). Here it is, Mr. Bender.

BEND. (C.). Give it to me.

FIFI (*playfully holding it away*). My, how imperious you are! (*Imitates him.*) "Give it to me."

BEND. Ah — but I beg — (*Tries to get the bill.*)

FIFI (*bus.*). You are in a hurry because you want to get rid of me. [JOSEPHINE *tries to open door* R. 3.

JOS. (*rattling door; outside* R. 3). Theodore! Theodore!

BEND. Here, quick! Yes, my love!

FIFI. There, take it! (*Hurriedly puts bill into BENDER's hand. Skips to door* L. 3.) Ta-ta! (*Throws a kiss to BENDER, and EXIT* L. 3.)

JOS. (*outside* R. 3). Theodore! what does this mean?

BEND. (*hastening to door* R. 3). What is it, my angel?

JOS. (*outside* R. 3). Open this door.

BEND. Why, is it locked? (*Unlocks and opens door.*) How did that occur?

ENTER JOSEPHINE, R. 3, dressed for the street, and bringing BENDER's hat and cane. Putting them on table R., and coming down C. She strides on, looking about in silence, and with evident suspicion.

JOS. (R. C.). Did you lock that door?

BEND. (*down* L. C.). I, my love!

JOS. It's perfectly evident that you did.

BEND. (*looking at his pipe*). Ah — ahem — you — I was smoking — and —

JOS. Well?

BEND. I thought the smoke might get in, you know. Ahem — (*Slight start, realizing he has made a blunder.*) Of course it must have been in a fit of abstraction, my dear.

JOS. Um! It was a fit of something, I've no doubt. (*Aside.*) I wonder if anything has been going on?

[*READY TOM and ALFRED to enter up* R. and R. 2 E., respectively.

BEND. (*aside*). She'll be over it before long. (*BENDER glances aside at the bill. Starts.*) Ha, eighty-six pounds!

JOS. (*crosses to L. ; turning*). I am ready to go now, Theodore.

BEND. (*crosses down R. ; aside*). Jerusalem ! I haven't a fiver to my name. She takes care of the money. Now, how the devil —

JOS. (*down c.*). What is the matter with you this morning ?

BEND. Eh ? Me ? Oh — nothing. Come, my dear. (*Starts up R.*)

JOS. (*following ; aside*). I shall watch that man very closely.

BEND. (*up R.*). Isn't Evangeline coming ?

JOS. You know very well she has a headache.

BEND. I thought it might be better.

JOS. (*buttoning glove*). She says it's worse — and — (*Aside.*) Now, I think of it, I'd better just lock the door. One can never be too careful with young girls. (*Bus. of locking door R. 3, and putting key into her pocket.*)

BEND. (*up R.*). Good Lord, I've got to get this money somehow !

JOS. (*going up R. to table, to get hat and cane*). There's your hat. There's your cane. (*She jams his hat upon his head.*) Come !

BEND. Yes, my angel ! (*Turns at door up R., and glances toward FIFT'S door.*)

ENTER TOM up R., and ALFRED R. 2 E., meeting JOSEPHINE and BENDER. TOM has a cup of tea and a package ; he crosses toward L. 2. EXIT L. 2.

JOS. (*up c. ; sweetly*). Ah, Mr. Hastings, good-morning !
[ALFRED bows politely.]

ALF. (*crosses around in front of table, and up to L. of JOSEPHINE*). Good-morning, my dear Mrs. Bender. Off for a little constitutional ?

JOS. (*very pleasantly*). Yes ; isn't it a lovely day ? (*Very sweetly.*) Come, Theodore !

[BENDER gets in a look at ALFRED. Eyes up.]

ALF. A very charming time to you !

BEND. (*to ALFRED, at door*). Oh, don't, my boy !

[*READY bell and voice, up R.* JOSEPHINE *laughs.*

EXEUNT BENDER and JOSEPHINE, up R.

ALF. (*coming down*). They're safely gone. Now to Evangeline ! (*Goes to door R. 3, and knocks cautiously.*) The little darling !

[*READY LANGHORNE and EVANGELINE, to enter L. C. and R. 3 E., respectively.*

EVAN. (*outside R. 3*). Who is it ?

ALF. How is your headache, Miss Bender ?

EVAN. (*outside R. 3*). Oh, is it you ? (*Tries to open door.*)

ALF. Yes ; who else should it be ?

EVAN. Why, I can't get out.

ALF. Is the door locked ?

EVAN. (*outside R. 3*). Yes ; isn't the key there ?

ALF. No ; but I'll soon have one. (*Feels quickly in pockets. Glances about. Runs to table and looks.*)

ENTER TOM from L. 2.

TOM (*going across quickly toward up R.*). Now he wants a mustard plaster, and a pail o' hot water for his feet.

ALF. Tom !

TOM (*startled*). Ge Whiffles ! I didn't see you, sir.

ALF. Haven't you any keys about you ? I must open that door.

TOM (*pulling out bunch of keys*). Quite right, sir. (*Tosses them to ALFRED.*) I ain't never seen nothin' that one o' them wouldn't open. (*Hurries to door up R.*)

ALF. Ah — thanks.

TOM. Don't mention it. (*Aside.*) An' I gits 'alf ! (*Starts off.*) [*Bell rings overhead, up-stairs, at up R. (Yelling up-stairs).* 'Alf-past eleving ! [*EXIT, door up R.*

VOICE (*above, up-stairs up R.*). I want to know what — oh —

ENTER LANGHORNE from L. C., crossing to up R. D.

ALF. Ah, Mr. Langhorne, going out for a stroll?

LANG. Yah — yah, my deah boy. (*EXIT* R. U. E.)

[ALFRED *quickly tries keys to door* R. 3, *and soon opens the door. Careful to leave one key from bunch in the lock. ENTER* EVANGELINE R. 3, *demurely.*

EVAN. (R. C.). Wasn't it dreadful of mamma to lock me in?

ALF. (L. C.). Simply diabolical. But do you happen to remember, little dear, what it is that laughs at locks? (*Takes EVANGELINE'S hand in his.*)

EVAN. That laughs at locks?

ALF. Yes.

EVAN. (*looking down; shakes head*). No — I — I haven't any idea.

ALF. Shall I tell you?

EVAN. (*looks at him*). Perhaps you'd better not.

ALF. Yes — but perhaps I'd better. [*She looks up.*
It is love.

EVAN. (*looks on ground*). Oh — (*looks at him*) I thought love laughed at locksmiths, Mr. Hastings.

ALF. (*laughs*). It laughs at anything, Evangeline, that tries to keep us apart.

[*Pause. EVANGELINE gets away and goes R., slightly embarrassed. She turns suddenly and goes to*
ALFRED.

EVAN. Alfred — oh! (*Covers mouth with hand. Bus. of pretty embarrassment.*)

ALF. (*quickly*). That's right — that's right! (*Bus.*)

EVAN. Listen. Mamma locked me in. It shows that she's suspicious, and will come back any moment to look after me.

ALF. How very unfeeling on her part!

EVAN. Oh, but that's the way mothers are, you know; so very suspicious and watchful.

ALF. So it is — and I can't say I blame them very much

for it either; that is, I don't blame your mother. Why, if you belonged to me — (*pauses, looking into her eyes*).

EVAN. (*timidly*). If — if — I belonged to you?

ALF. (*with feeling*). If you were mine, little dear, my own, you know, and nobody's else, I'd be watchful too. Why, I'd be simply wretched every moment you were out of my sight.

EVAN. Would you?

ALF. Indeed, I would!

EVAN. How do you know?

ALF. (*low and earnest voice*). Because — because I am now (*slight pause*). So you see, it wouldn't be right for me to find fault with your mother for being watchful, would it?

EVANG. (*suddenly starting away*). No — and she is — dreadfully (*looks about anxiously*) — and we must be very careful. You stand there in that door (*pointing up R., going herself up to door R. 3 E., and ALFRED to up R. D.*), and I will stay close by this door. Then we can talk; and when you hear any one coming, I can run in, and you must be sure to lock the door just the way it was.

ALF. (*at door up R.*). Ah — but —

EVAN. (*at door, R. 3 E.*). Please! please! please! Any one coming?

[*They take positions as EVANGELINE suggested.*
READY bell L., and voice up R.

ALF. But, Evangeline — can't I come a little nearer?

EVAN. Oh, this is quite near! See (*reaches out hand*), you can reach my hand from there.

ALF. (*quickly catching her hand, and holding it*). So I can!

EVAN. Oh — I didn't mean for you to do it!

ALF. (*nearer to her*). My little darling! Have you thought of me once — since yesterday?

EVAN. (*after pause*). Hundreds and hundreds of times.

ALF. You have! (*Bus. ; holds her in his arms.*)

EVAN. (*with some embarrassment*). Yes. Have you — thought of — of me any?

ALF. Thought of you! Will you believe me if I tell you how much?

EVAN. Oh, yes! I could never doubt your word — that is, if it is not too much, you know.

ALF. I'm afraid it is — if I should really tell you how much I've thought of you.

EVAN. Then perhaps you'd better not. But you might just tell me how many times; perhaps I would believe that.

ALF. How many times? [EVANGELINE *nods demurely*.
How many times I've thought of you?

[EVANGELINE *same business*.

Only once.

EVAN. Once! (ALFRED *nods*.) Since yesterday!

ALF. Only once — since yesterday; for I've thought of nothing else, my little darling — and no one else — and so that one thought has lasted me the whole time.

[EVANGELINE, *reconciled*, allows him to draw her close again.

EVAN. O Alfred! I cannot bear to think we are to leave London in only a few weeks.

ALF. What matter, my little love — I shall follow you, wherever you go. [READY TOM *to enter* R. U. D.

EVAN. Will you? I — I don't know how it is, but even on the second day we came here, it seemed as if we had known each other for hundreds and hundreds of years. You were so good — so kind — and so, of course — I liked you very much — you see.

[READY BENDER *to enter up* R.

ALF. Liked me? Ah — but don't you — just a little more than like — just a little? [Bus. EVANGELINE *embarrassed*.

EVAN. (*low voice*). I like you — very much — of course —

ALF. How much? Enough to make it love — just a little love?

EVAN. (*pause; bus.*) I'm afraid so.

ALF. (*holding her*). You dear! (*Holding EVANGELINE'S hand.*) [EVANGELINE suddenly, on reflecting what she has said, buries her face on ALFRED'S bosom, in confusion.

(*Aside.*) Merciful heavens! What have I been saying?

ENTER TOM, R. U. D.

TOM. All the Comforts of Home! (*Perceives them.*)
Beg parding!

EXIT, R. U. D. ALFRED and EVANGELINE start away from each other quickly.

EVAN. Did he see that I — that you — that we —?

ALF. No — I don't think he saw it. But I have a better idea than the one you had a while ago. There's Langhorne's room — no one in it. Window commands view of street — we can chat there, and see the moment any one comes near the house. (*He holds out his hand.*)

EVAN. That is a good place. (*Takes his hand, and they both skip quickly into room up L., and stand or sit near the window, so that they are in sight of the audience. They converse.*) ENTER BENDER suddenly, door up R., breathing as if he had come in a violent hurry.

BEND. (c.). I've escaped! That is to say, by some unfortunate accident I lost my wife in the crowd. (*Looks at FIFI'S door.*) That money! There's only one way — I must raise it on Josephine's diamonds. She scarcely ever wears them — and I'll write Bleecker for the money, and get them out again before she notices it. (*Goes down to door R. 3.*) But the devil of it is, what Evangeline will say. If I could only get her out of the room on some pretext or other! (*Listens at door.*) She seems to be asleep. My soul — that would be fortunate! (*He opens door very cautiously and looks in.*) Why, she isn't there! (*Looks about.*) All the better — all the better! (*EXIT into room R. 3.*)

[*Bell rings outside L., in DABNEY'S room. Pause.*

Bell rings again in DABNEY'S room. ENTER BENDER R. 3, with a jewel case which he tries to conceal under his coat.

There, ha! ha! Burglarizing my own room! But where the deuce can Evangeline be? I'll lock the door—for I'll be back immediately. (*Locks door, taking key out.*) How careless, to leave the house open like this! Some one might have got in as easy as not, and stolen these diamonds, and then what in the devil's name would I have done? (*He goes up R., putting key in his pocket.*)

VOICE (*up-stairs, up R.*) Is anybody there?

BEND. (*starting, frightened*). Ough! Oh, Lord! (*Bus. of recovering. Speaks up-stairs.*) Yes; what do you want?

VOICE (*up-stairs, up R.*). I want to know what time it is?

BEND. The devil take him!

VOICE (*up-stairs, up R.*). I want to set my watch.

[*READY THOMPSON and BAILIFF to enter up R.*

BEND. (*calling up-stairs*). Well, set it back three-quarters of an hour. (*EXIT BENDER, up R.*)

[*Bell rings long and continuously in DABNEY'S room, outside L. 2. READY TOM to enter up R.*

ALF. (*L. C.; coming down into room, followed by EVANGELINE*). Good heavens! What a fiendish disturbance that fellow in there makes!

EVAN. (*R. C.*). What did you give him such an unearthly bell for?

ALF. The only one I could find. By Jove—a good idea! Do you know how they go to work to muffle a bell?

EVAN. Why, yes; just tie a piece of flannel around the tongue.

ALF. I will proceed to muffle Dabney's bell. (*Squeezes EVANGELINE'S hand.*) Be back in a minute, darling. (*EXIT L. 2.*) [*MUSIC. Ag. pp., louder, for bus., door locked. Play until stop cue.*

EVAN. (C.; *going R., and stopping near door R. 3*). He loves me! He loves me! And I—I love him too! Yet there is something he is keeping from me—I can see that! Oh, I would be very happy—if I were sure—(*meditates sadly; suddenly happy again. Going to door R. 3*). But if he loves me—what else could I want? (*She tries to open door. Startled at finding it fastened.*) Locked! (*Tries again.*) Locked; and the key gone! Oh, dear! (*Frightened; she looks about.*) If mamma should come! Alfred—Mr. Hastings, I mean! (*Starts—listening.*) Oh, I hear some one coming! What shall I do? (*She darts to L. C., and suddenly turns into LANGHORNE'S room up L. C., and shuts door.*)

ENTER THOMPSON up R., with BAILIFF.

[*Stop music.*]

THOMPSON (C.; *coming into room followed by BAILIFF*). This is where 'e lives, sir, and there's 'is room. I was in ere this morning, and found hout.

[*READY* ALFRED, *to enter L. 2 E.*]

BAILIFF (R. C.; *crosses to C.*). Very well, where's my war-rants? (*BAILIFF business a moment, getting out papers.*)

ENTER TOM up R., *crossing behind them, and down to L. C. hastily, with mustard plaster and pail of steaming hot water. BAILIFF and THOMPSON start toward LANGHORNE'S door. TOM runs quickly against them with pail of hot water, spilling some water.*

BAILIFF.

THOMPSON.

TOM.

TOM (L. C.). I begs your pardon, gents; but what's wantin'?

THOMP. (R. C.). We've come 'ere to attach Mr. Lang-horne's things.

TOM. Ge-Whiffles! Well, I likes that!

BAIL. (C.). We're werry glad as you likes it, young man. So if you please, stand out o' the way.

[*READY* JOSEPHINE, *to enter up R.*]

TOM. (*Bus. Slight threatening motion with pail of hot water; may simply set it in front of him*). Oh, it's that, is it? But supposin' I don't please?

BAIL. (*loud voice*). You'd interfere with the law, would ye?

TOM. Oh, no! But afore you gits away with everything, I'd just make certain as we had enough o' Langhorne's luggage to settle up our little rent.

BAIL. (*loud voice*). Look 'ere. I don't know nothink about your little rent, nor do I care.

[BAILIFF and THOMPSON drop down R. in front of table.

TOM (*loud*). I see you don't; an' it makes me have to do all the carin' myself — so — *ENTER ALFRED L. 2.*

TOM.

BAILIFF.

ALFRED.

THOMPSON.

ALF. What's all this row about?

BAIL. I've a warrant 'ere to attach the property of one Langhorne.

TOM. One Langhorne? That's all there is — ef ye was leavin' us another, I wouldn't care.

ALF. (*goes up toward TOM*). No use, Tom — we've got to submit.

TOM. An' let 'em take everything, sir?

ALF. No other way, my boy. (*Trying to persuade TOM to move away from door. They remonstrate with each other. Pantomime bus.*

ENTER JOSEPHINE up R., excited and breathless.

JOSEPHINE (*bustling into room, down C.*). Where is my husband? Have you seen my husband, I say?

THOMP. (*to whom the remark seemed to be addressed*). No; an' I don't want to see 'im, neither.

[BAILIFF and THOMPSON up R. of table, and over to TOM, L.

JOS. (*going excitedly about, R.*). To leave me in that way — in the middle of a crowded street — with teams and omnibuses — and — and — oh! (*Angry exclamation. Stamps foot.*)

BAILIFF.

TOM.

JOSEPHINE.

THOMPSON.

ALFRED.

BAIL. Come — I can't wait here!

TOM (*at D. L. C., over ALFRED'S shoulder*). There ain't no one asked ye to.

ALF. (*L. of TOM*). See here, Tom —

TOM. Just let me drop this 'ere hot water down the back of his neck, and decorate his cheek with a mustard plaster.

ALF. (*pulling TOM out of the way, and putting him over to his L.*). It's no use, I tell you — they can lock us up if we interfere.

TOM (*discouraged; going one side*). An' I gits 'alf!

ALF. There, gentlemen. (*He opens door of LANGHORNE'S room, L. C.*) You can go on with your — (*Sudden start. Shuts door with slam, and stands before it.*) Death and Destruction! Evangeline!

[JOSEPHINE turns at bus., and looks. Tableau.

DOOR.

ALFRED.

BAILIFF.

TOM.

THOMPSON.

JOSEPHINE.

TOM (*down L.; aside*). Ge-Whiffles! Wonder what struck 'im then?

BAIL. (*up C.*). Say, are we goin' hin, or not?

ALF. (*up L. C.*). Not just now. (*Glances at JOSEPHINE.*)

THOMP. (*R. of BAILIFF*). What's the reason we can't?

ALF. The — the room isn't in order yet.

JOS. (*aside*). Oh, what delicacy!

BAIL. Well, we'll put it in order mighty quick. (*Advances a step.*)

ALF. (*motions him back*). Stop! Wait!

[*READY muffled bell, L.*

(*ALFRED comes forward a little.*) What's the amount of your claim?

THOMP. (*R. of ALFRED*). Eight pound twelve and sixpence. (*Produces bill.*)

ALF. (*pulling money from pockets*). I'll settle the thing. It cleans me out, but I'll settle it.

TOM (*down L., putting pail of water on desk, L.; aghast; aside*). Oh, he's gone way off his head!

THOMP. Very well, sir. (*Takes money.*) Am much obliged — the receipt, sir. (*Going up R.*)

[*Bus. of TOM with plaster sticking to his hand.*

ALF. (*L. C.*). Now, kindly — (*indicating door*).

BAIL. (*C. to ALFRED*). But you've forgotten one little matter, my friend. There's costs to be settled afore I goes. One pound ten and six, sir, if you please.

ALF. Oh, the deuce! See here, my man, I haven't got it. Can't you —

BAIL. No, I can't. So just stand aside now.

[*BAILIFF advances toward door up L. C., and is stopped by ALFRED, who stands before it.*

JOS. Stop! (*She goes to BAILIFF, feeling in her pockets. Bus. of paying BAILIFF.*) I will not see such delicacy of sentiment trodden under foot. Here! Take your miserable costs!

ALF. But, my dear Mrs. Bender —

JOS. Not a word! I prefer to do it.

ALF. (*aside*). By Jove, if the old girl knew what she was paying for!

BAIL. (*having counted money, etc.*). Now we're all right, I believe. (*Starts R. with THOMPSON.*)

TOM. Oh, yes, you're all right! (*Follows them, R.*) But where do we come in?

[*EXEUNT* BAILIFF and THOMPSON up R. *Pause.*
A peculiar and unearthly sound of muffled bell comes from DABNEY'S room, L. 2. (NOTE. Experiment to get an effective and laughable sound for this.)
 TOM, who is up R., turns in surprise. ALFRED and JOSEPHINE also listen.

(*Starting toward DABNEY'S room, L. 2.*) Well, ef his bell ain't done an' took a spasm now! (TOM *seizes water-pail and plaster, and rushes off L. 2. As he goes.*) Comin' sir — comin'! Comin'! (*EXIT, L. 2.*)

JOS. (R. C. to ALFRED). I admire your delicacy so much, Mr. Hastings. [*READY knock, L. C.*

ALF. (L. C.). Thanks! Thanks! But I—I really can't help it; it is an inborn instinct with me, madam. (*Trying to keep her away from door up L. C.*)

JOS. (R. C.). Yes; but I don't know many people who would be willing to pay so much for a mere sentiment. Is the gentleman's apartment really in such disorder? Let me just peep in. (*Turns as if to go to the door up L. C.*)

ALF. (*with a start*). No! (*Stands between her and the door L. C.*) Ah — that is — really, Mrs. Bender — consider my feelings! [*JOSEPHINE looks at ALFRED an instant.*

JOS. (*aside*). How he started! It can't be possible there's any — I really begin to suspect that, after all — (*A frown appears upon her face slowly. Turns to ALFRED. Voice changed to harder tone.*) Mr. Hastings, I shall have to insist upon looking into that room.

ALF. Insist? Come now — that's hardly the thing, is it, for one who appreciates my delicacy of sentiment?

[*READY* LANGHORNE, to enter up R.

JOS. Delicacy, sir, has nothing to do with it now. I am living beneath your roof with my family — my husband — and my daughter — (*on "daughter," points to room R. 3.*)

[ALFRED gives a slight start.

If I became convinced that everything was not as it should be, I would instantly quit the house.

ALF. Surely, you do not suspect —

JOS. From your actions, Mr. Hastings, I know that there is some one in that room you wish to conceal. As you do not choose to relieve my mind at once by opening the door, it more than confirms my suspicions. I shall therefore wait here until the person — whoever it is — comes out. (*Sits herself in a chair, back to audience, L. of R. table.*) It is a duty I owe my family.

[ALFRED simply stares blankly at JOSEPHINE. After watching JOSEPHINE seat herself, he pulls newspaper from pocket. Draws chair before door up L. C., and reads.

(*Aside.*) If he thinks that affects my mind, he is the most mistaken individual on this quarter of the globe.

[JOSEPHINE begins to hum a song, her indignation showing in it. ALFRED takes it up, whistling softly. JOSEPHINE stops angrily, and looks daggers. A soft knock on door up L. C., from within. READY BENDER, to enter up R.

ALF. (*aside*). The devil! Now Evangeline wants to get out. (*Coughs, and hitches around in his chair as if to cover up the sound made by EVANGELINE.*)

ENTER LANGHORNE up R., running in hastily, as if pursued.

LANG. (*coming in*). If that woman saw me. I am lost! (*Going to ALFRED. Stops, seeing situation.*)

[READY EVANGELINE to enter up L.

ALF. (*at door L. C.; aside*). Merciful Powers! Now he'll want to get in. [JOSEPHINE starts, and watches eagerly.

LANG. (*on ALFRED'S R., going quickly to door*). You will permit me?

ALF. (*quickly, in an undertone to LANGHORNE*). For

Heaven's sake, don't! There's a woman in there who must not be seen.

LANG. (*to* ALFRED). But see heah, deah boy—there's a woman after me, and I mustn't be seen.

ALF. (*to* LANGHORNE). Go into my room.

LANG. Your—oh—certainly! (*Starts down R.*) I don't care where I go, ye know, as long as I go somewhere. (*Dodges around JOSEPHINE'S chair.*) Aw—chawming day! (*EXIT R. 2.*)

JOS. (*aside*). It's a conspiracy!

ENTER BENDER up R., rushing in.

BEND. Ha, ha! Thank Heaven, I've fixed that! (*Sees JOSEPHINE. Instantly turns square about, and starts toward door up R. again, and EXIT door up R.*)

JOS. (*rising quickly*). Theodore! Theodore! Stop, I say! (*She follows BENDER.*) Stop! I wish to speak with you. Theodore! (*EXIT, door up R.*)

ALF. (*aside*). Thank Heaven for that! (*Opens door up L.*) Evangeline, quick!

ENTER EVANGELINE, up L.

Quick, quick! To your room! (*Passing her across to R.*)

[*EVANGELINE starts toward R. 3. ENTER JOSEPHINE and BENDER, up R. JOSEPHINE sees EVANGELINE, and stands in horror for an instant.*]

JOS. (*up R. C.; on seeing EVANGELINE*). What! (*Almost a scream.*) [*All stand on tableau.*]

ALF. (*L., having fallen on ottoman; aside*). Lost!

BEND. (*up R.; aside*). Hullo! (*Looks about to see what it is.*)

BENDER. JOSEPHINE.

EVANGELINE.

ALFRED.

JOS. (*R. C.*). Then you were there?

EVAN. (*L. C.*). Yes, mamma.

[*ALFRED starts as if to speak. EVANGELINE motions him not to.*]

No, Alfred, I will tell them.

BEND. "Alfred!" (*Coming down R.*)

JOS. (*up R. C.*). "Alfred!"

EVAN. (*C.*). I had been chatting with Alfred, and I hid in that room when I heard you coming. I will not and cannot deny it.

BEND. (*R. ; aside, admiringly*). What courage the girl has!

JOS. (*up R. C.*). And you have the hardihood to speak of this so calmly! What—what does it mean?

EVAN. (*up L. C.*). It means, mamma, that Alfred and I love each other. He has told me so, and I have told him so—and that's all there is about it.

[*READY FIFI, to enter L. 3 E.*

BEND. (*down R. ; aside*). Magnificent! Such coolness! (*Speaks aloud without thinking, clapping hands together.*)
Bravo!

JOS. (*turning upon him*). Theodore! (*JOSEPHINE unlocks door R. 3 E.*)

[*BENDER collapses, but recovers, and claps hands together behind his back, where JOSEPHINE cannot see him.*

(*To EVANGELINE.*) Go to your room at once! What course I shall take with you, I do not yet know.

EVAN. (*giving ALFRED her hand*). Until we meet again, Alfred dear!

[*JOSEPHINE opens door R. 3, and stands. EXIT EVANGELINE calmly R. 3, turning at door, and throwing a kiss seriously and tenderly to ALFRED.*

BEND. Ha, ha! (*Chuckles—not a laugh. Crosses up to ALFRED, L. C.*)

JOS. (*at door, R. 3 E.*). Theodore!

[*BENDER becomes serious at once.*
I have a few words to say to you soon. (*EXIT R. 3, after giving BENDER a look of great significance.*)

[*READY DABNEY and TOM, to enter L. 2 E.*

BEND. (*R. C., to ALFRED L. C., slapping him on the shoulder*).

That's a woman — eh? Now — now you can have some idea of how I feel — ha, ha, ha!

MUSIC. Lively music, with comedy element very predominant. Play pp. during dialogue, increasing to a little louder near end of act, and forte for curtain. FIFI opens door L. 3.

FIFI. Mr. Bender!

BEND. Eh?

FIFI. The costume has come. Do you want to see me as Prince Vladimir?

BEND. The costume? (*Giving a glance towards door R. 3.*) Perfectly delighted, my dear! (*BENDER hastens toward FIFI.*) *ENTER FIFI, L. 3, in costume of Prince Vladimir.* Ha, ha, ha! Charming! charming!

FIFI. How do you like it, Mr. Bender?

[*Just as BENDER reaches the table near R. C., JOSEPHINE ENTERS R. 3.*

JOS. (*up R., above the table*). Now, Theodore, I would like to know —

[*ALFRED, up C., gives quick exclamation of alarm.*

BEND. (*C.; just above the L. of table; terrified*). Ah! (*He quickly snatches table-cover from table near C., and raises it high in the air, so that FIFI is hidden from view.*) My dear have you noticed the beautiful pattern on this table-cover? Simply divine! Exquisite! Adorable!

[*ALFRED, up C., seizes FIFI on table-cover bus., and hurries her off at L. 3 an instant later. ENTER EVANGELINE, door R. 3. She stands at the door, trying to see what causes the excitement. JOSEPHINE, on table-cover bus., stands astonished. At table-cover bus. and exclamations, etc., enter DABNEY L. 2 E. DABNEY is swaddled up with flannels, etc., as if for illness. Mustard-plaster on chest, old dressing-gown, stocking-feet, etc.*

MUSIC. A little louder, but still well down.

DAB. (L. C. ; seeing FIFI as ALFRED hurries her off). Ah !
(Half shriek.) That creature sang in my opera, and she —

ALF. (up C. ; quick shout to TOM). Stop him !

(ENTER TOM L. 2 E. He carries plaster, bandages, etc.)

TOM. (L. ; jumping on DABNEY). Quite right, sir.

[READY curtain.

MUSIC. Forte for curtain. TOM throws arms around DABNEY'S neck, head, etc., so that he is effectively silenced, and they fall upon the ottoman together, DABNEY uttering muffled yells and shrieks, TOM putting plaster over his mouth. ALFRED snatches up newspaper, and stands reading nonchalantly before door L. 3. BENDER drops, overcome, into chair up C., the table-cover falling over him. JOSEPHINE, R., or R. C., transfixed with astonishment at the behavior of the gentlemen. (NOTE. All this business at climax to occupy only an instant.)

[RING curtain.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE. — Same as in Act I. Some trifling changes in furniture can be made to advantage. Anything that will tend to make a little change will perhaps relieve the monotony.

MUSIC. — Comedy bit for rise of curtain. Lively, and somewhat adapted to TOM's business. Come to *pp.* when curtain is up. Stop on beginning of TOM's speech.

TOM discovered working down near C., at a large shallow pasteboard box, the empty interior of which is exposed to view of audience. He appears to have been glueing something on bottom, which is turned up stage. *READY BENDER*, to enter R. 3 E.
READY bell, off L. 2 E.

TOM (*seated L. of R. table*). I've had enough o' that there cove as yells down them stairs ev'ry other minit, a-wanting ter know what time it is, an' I'm a-goin' ter fix him so's he won't give us no more trouble. Ef he goes on with it, the nervous galoot in there's a-goin' ter leave, an' he'll burst up the whole business afore we know it—an' I ain't goin' ter have the business bursted now (*bus. working*)—while I gits half. (*Bus. with box. He picks up box, rushes up R., then, suddenly turning box so that bottom is to front, he quickly hangs it to a hook on wall near foot of stairs, and immediately rushes down and to table C., where he gets a pot of black paint and brushes, waiting for laugh, if any, on audience seeing back of box. On back of box is painted or pasted a white paper or cardboard, with an enormous clock face painted upon it, without any hands. TOM dashes up with the paint, and quickly paints from six to ten hands on the clock, these hands pointing in every direc-*

tion. *He names the time of each as he puts it in. Bus.*) Quarter-past eiving. (*Bus.*) Two minutes afore three. (*Bus.*) Seving o'clock. (*Etc.*) There! now he can take his choice — an' no noise about it. (*Stands up R., viewing his work.*) That there ain't so bad, now. When I gits through with this here job, I kin go into the clock business.

[*READY bell and noise above, up R.*
ENTER BENDER, R. 3. *He is in good spirits, and comes on whistling. Stops and looks at the clock face and at TOM.*

What do you think of it, sir?

BEND. (R.). Is that style of timepiece your own invention?
[*READY ALFRED, to enter R. 2 E.*

TOM (L.). It's fur the feller up-stairs, sir; him as makes such a contineral hollerin' fur the time. He'd orter be out now in a minit or two — it's more'n half an hour now sence the last time.

BEND. Well, all I can say is —

[*Bell rings in DABNEY'S room L. 2. TOM starts up R., but stops.*

TOM. Ge-Whiffles! I thought it was 'im. It was the other one. (*Goes toward L. 2.*) [*Bell rings above, up R.*

TOM and BEND. There! (*TOM and BENDER bus. of quick start and look.*)

VOICE (*above; up R.*). Look here! Can't somebody down there tell me what —

[*Sudden jangle of bell, which comes banging and rattling down the stairs from above, followed by pipe, novel, and a beer mug; noise of furniture. TOM and BENDER bus. of holding in suppressed laughter. Finally burst out. If audience take it, keep up by BENDER falling into a chair, and TOM rolling on the floor.*

TOM (*on bus.*). That there settled 'im, sir.

BEND. That clock would settle anything. Ha, ha!

ENTER ALFRED door R. 2. Hat, etc., as if from street.

ALF. (R.; *after looking at bus.*). From appearances, one would suppose you were having quite a humorous time.

BEND. (C.). Ah, ha, ha, ha! (*Points to clock up R.*) For the benefit of the second floor!

ALF. (*crosses to C.; seeing clock*). Has the second floor seen it?

TOM. Yes, sir; he's just took an observation.

[*Bell rings in DABNEY'S room outside L. 2.*
Ge-Whiffles! I forgot all about that nervous galoot.
(*EXIT L. 2.*)

DAB. (*in room L. 2 E.*) Don't! don't!

[*BENDER goes walking about room, smiling, and whistling snatches of things out of tune, hands behind him, etc. Half smiling now and then, as if thinking of something very pleasant. ALFRED watches him a while.*

ALF. (*to L.; aside*). The old boy is in great spirits to-day. Wonder what's going on. As he is to be my father-in-law, I'll have to look out for him a little. (*Looks at BENDER.*)

[*BENDER goes up R., and looks off at door R. 3 E.*
Think of it! Engaged to that little dear—yes, and as good as engaged to my cousin Emily at the same time! A pretty position to be in! But I'm in it, and the only way is to tell Uncle Egbert the whole thing when he comes home; for I couldn't give up Evangeline. Oh, no! Anything but that!

[*BENDER comes down C.*
Anything but that!

BEND. (C.). Alfred, my boy, has the post come in this morning?

ALF. (L.). No, not yet.

[*BENDER walks about up and down R. ALFRED sticks his hands in his pockets and looks at him.*
I say, you must be expecting something very nice.

BEND. (R. C. ; *stops and looks at ALFRED*). I am. (*Goes near ALFRED. Speaks confidentially.*) Ha, ha ! (*Chuckles.*) It's too good to keep.

ALF. Don't keep it, then.

BEND. The fact is (*glances around to see that no one overhears*), I'm expecting a letter — for my wife.

ALF. That is, she's expecting it?

BEND. No, no ! Not by a — 'hem ! (*Bus. Glance.*) She doesn't know anything about it.

ALF. Ah !

BEND. I — (*impressively, in ALFRED'S ear*). I wrote it myself ; disguised hand, of course. Oh, she'll never know it's from me !

ALF. In that case, I've no doubt she'll be delighted to get it.

BEND. No, I hardly think so, as it informs her that I have an appointment to-day, at the park, near the marble arch.

ALF. It does ! You mean — a lady ?

[BENDER *nods emphatically, looking very jovial and pleased, and walks around a little, whistling.*

But, my dear Mr. Bender —

BEND. (R. C.). Perfectly true. (*Nods significantly.*) I have an appointment — but not at the park.

ALF. (L. C.). Where ?

[READY JOSEPHINE, to enter R. 3 E.

BEND. (*confidentially*). Here.

ALF. By Jove ! [BENDER *nods, and walks as before.*
Who is the — the other party, if I may ask ?

[BENDER *stops, turns to ALFRED. Motions significantly toward FIFI'S door, L. 3.*

Not — not the opera singer !

BEND. (*finger to lips*). Sh ! Yes.

ALF. (*after regarding BENDER an instant*). How very rapid you are for an elderly man.

All the Comforts of Home.

BEND. (R.; *pleased*). I—I did Miss Fifi a little favor, you know; and out of gratitude she has invited me to a—aheim—a champagne breakfast. That is, she furnishes the invitation, and I—furnish the breakfast.

ALF. And in the meantime, Mrs. Bender goes to waylay you?

BEND. (*taking R.*). At the marble arch.

[ALFRED *stares in astonishment*. BENDER *pauses an instant, then paces restlessly up to C.* ALFRED *crosses to R.*

Now, what the deuce delays that mail?

[*Door of room R. 3 opens.*

Careful, now!

[BENDER *down, meeting JOSEPHINE. ENTER JOSEPHINE, dressed for calling. Crosses down L.*

Why, Josephine, love, are you going—anywhere in particular?

[READY TOM, *to enter L. 2 E.*

JOS. (L.). Do you forget that we were to make several calls to-day with our dear Alfred and Evangeline?

ALF. (R.). Oh, Heavens!

[READY *double knock, up R. door.*

BENDER.

ALFRED.

JOSEPHINE.

JOS. (L.). Alfred, dear, not dressed yet?

ALF. (R.). Well, it seemed to me—that—er—the weather—

JOS. Why, the weather is perfect.

ALF. Yes; but the—the reports say there's another blizzard on the way from America. (*Holding up a newspaper.*) Do you know what a frightful thing a blizzard from America is?

JOS. No; and I don't care. (*Severely.*) We are to make these calls.

[ALFRED stands an instant looking at her. BENDER smothers a laugh, but quickly catches himself, and looks solemn. ALFRED turns and goes to door R. 2.]

ALF. (*at door R. 2; aside*). Anything but calling on her relatives! (*Turns and looks at JOSEPHINE. She is still looking at him. He at once exits into his room R. 2.*)

JOS. (L.; *looks severely at BENDER*). Theodore, you are to come with us.

BEND. (R.). I? Oh, of course — of course. (*Aside.*) Now what is the matter with that d——d postman!

[ENTER TOM L. 2, with a demijohn and several bottles. He goes rapidly across, up R.]

JOS. Thomas! Thomas!

TOM (*up R.*). Yes'm — one minute, mum. (*Up R., and puts things down. Turns to JOSEPHINE.*)

JOS. Come here.

TOM. I am here, mum.

[*Double knock of Postman, door up R.*]

BEND. (*start of relief*). Tom — letters.

TOM (*going to door up R.*). Quite right, sir. (*TOM disappears an instant. Returns at once.*)

[BENDER fills time with a pleased smile and glance at JOSEPHINE.]

(*Goes quickly to BENDER.*) Paper for you, sir. (*Down c.*)

BEND. (*alarmed*). Is that — all?

TOM (*goes to JOSEPHINE*). Letter fur you, mum. (*Goes up R. and stands a moment.*)

[JOSEPHINE takes it, and bus. of opening.]

BEND. (*sits L. of R. table, opening the paper, and looking over the top at JOSEPHINE; aside, chuckling*). That's the one.

[JOSEPHINE looks up. BENDER bus. of instantly opening and plunging into his paper.]

TOM (C.; *aside*). Ge-Whiffles! The old duck's got somethin' on hand again; I kin tell it every time. (*EXIT up R. to L.*)

JOS. (L.). What wretched writing! (*Reads.*)

BEND. (R.; *aside*). Sorry she doesn't like it.

[*READY* ALFRED, *to enter* R. 2 E.

JOS. (*reads*). "Respected Madam. Pray do not consider me too presuming, but I think it my duty to — warn you." (*She looks closer, interested.*) What's this! (*Reads more excitedly, repeating aloud only the important parts.*) "At Hyde Park, Marble Arch, between ten and eleven o'clock — A well-meaning Friend." Ah! (*Subdued gasp, dropping the letter to the floor.*)

[*BENDER has had his eye on JOSEPHINE over or under his paper during above.*

BEND. (*rises to JOSEPHINE, laying aside paper*). Now, what they wanted to send me that for — er — Good Heavens, Josephine! (*As if noticing her strained expression.*) No unpleasant news, I hope?

JOS. (L.; *starts. Assumes a smile which is rather ghastly*). Oh, no. Very pleasant — very — ha, ha! Yes.

BEND. (R., *as if suspicious*). Um! Looks like a man's handwriting.

JOS. (*assumed indifference*). Does it? (*Smiles.*)

BEND. (*assuming some warmth*). I said it did.

JOS. Oh — really!

[*BENDER makes a motion as if to pick the letter up; JOSEPHINE, with sudden exclamation of alarm, snatches it from floor. They stand looking at each other. Tableau for an instant.*

BEND. (R. C.). There's something in that letter.

JOS. (L. C.). That's quite possible, as you didn't write it.

BEND. Your actions are very suspicious, madam. (*Bus.*) I'd have you understand that, as your husband, I have a right —

ENTER ALFRED, R. 2, *dressed for calling. He stops on seeing situation.*

(*Aside. Turning away. Chuckles.*)

JOS. (*crosses to ALFRED, R. To ALFRED, very pleasantly, yet showing the bitter feeling beneath*). Oh, Alfred, I have changed my plans a little; I feel a headache coming on — and (*glances at BENDER*) —

JOSEPHINE.

ALFRED.

BENDER.

and — I think I'd better lie down quietly for a little while.

[*READY EVANGELINE, to enter R. 3 E.*

BEND. (*approaching JOSEPHINE; speaks sympathetically*). Oh, my dear Josephine, I —

[*JOSEPHINE shoots a glance at BENDER which steps him instantly.*

JOS. (C.; *to ALFRED*). You and Evangeline are to go to the Dickermans' without me, and I will call there for you later.

BEND. (L.). Oh, so we aren't to go with them? In that case, my dear, I will take the opportunity to call on an old business friend of mine in Upton Street.

JOS. (*looking calmly and stonily at BENDER*). You will call on an old business friend of yours in Upton Street?

BEND. Yes. You remember Barton Briggs? Dear old fellow! Shall I give him your regards?

JOS. Oh, do. By all means. (*Showing savageness in spite of herself.*) Give the dear old fellow my regards.

[*READY TOM, to enter up R.*

BEND. (*crosses up to R. U. D. Cheerfully*). Yes, my angel, I will. Good-bye for a little while. (*EXIT up R., whistling or humming; can get hat and cane up R. if he cannot easily arrange to bring them on at entrance.*)

JOS. (*taking L.; looking after him. Aside*). Oh, the hypocrite! (*Going up C.*)

[*ENTER EVANGELINE, R. 3, very tastefully dressed.*

ALFRED *to C.* EVANGELINE *down on his R.*

ALF. (*going quickly to EVANGELINE*). My little darling, how enchanting you look!

EVAN. (R. C. ; *looking up to him ; pleased*). Do I? (*Bus. with gloves, etc.*) But you ought not to say so, you know.

ALF. (C.). Can't help it. (*ALFRED glances at JOSEPHINE, and seeing her turned away, steals a kiss from EVANGELINE. Bus.*) [JOSEPHINE turns quickly and comes down L.

EVAN. (R. C.). Where is papa?

JOS. (L. ; *significantly*). He has gone to call upon a dear old business friend.

EVAN. (R.). But I thought —

[READY BENDER, to enter up R.

JOS. No matter what you thought. Come — we will start. (*Goes up R. a little.*)

ALF. (C.). Start! Aren't you going to lie down after all? [ALFRED and EVANGELINE go up R.

JOS. I have decided it would be better for me to take the air.

ALF. Oh!

[JOSEPHINE suddenly turns, as if she had thought of something. Marches down to her door, R. 3, and reaching in, gets an umbrella. ENTER TOM up R. from L. He comes down a little L., looking at the party. ALFRED and EVANGELINE watch JOSEPHINE'S movements. JOSEPHINE walks back up R., carrying umbrella with peculiar fierceness of manner. TOM, who was coming slowly down, slides back off to L. C., watching JOSEPHINE with evident concern.

EVAN. (*surprised*). But, mamma, dear, you don't want an umbrella to-day!

TOM.

D. R. 3. E., JOSEPHINE.

EVANGELINE.

ALFRED.

JOS. (*turning at door up R.*) Oh, I don't know about that. The report says there's a blizzard coming from America, and it's just as well to be prepared. (*Marches out up R., gripping the umbrella ferociously.*)

EVAN. (*looking at ALFRED*). What does she mean, Alfred?

ALF. She means business.

[*EXEUNT ALFRED and EVANGELINE, up R.*

TOM (*gives a whistle indicative of "whew!"*). Ge-Whiffles, but ef it's old Bender she's got in her mind, they'll have to bring 'im 'ome in baskets! (*EXIT, up R. to L.*)

[*ENTER BENDER, door up R.*

BEND. (*coming C.*). Everything is working like a charm! My wife safely down the street, and making a bee-line for Hyde Park. I hope she'll enjoy the walk. If she doesn't — 'hem — perhaps she'll enjoy the walk back. (*Chuckles.*)

[*ENTER TOM up R., from L., with two bottles of champagne. Crossing to door L. 2 E.*

Ah, Tom! (*Meeting TOM up L. C.*)

TOM (L. C.). Yes, sir!

BEND. (R. C.). They are to send in a little breakfast from Torino's. When it comes, take care of it.

[*READY knock and VOICE up R. D.*

TOM (L. C.). I've had breakfast, sir.

BEND. (R. C.). No, no! It's for Miss Oritanski. Ha, ha! (*Chuckles.*) I am invited to join her. I say — I suppose there's no objection — to — 'hem — a — quiet little breakfast here?

TOM. None whatsoever, sir. We aims to give our lodgers "all the comforts of home."

BEND. Good! When it comes, just take it to her room.

TOM. She locked it up, sir, when she went out.

BEND. (*thunderstruck*). Went — went out!

TOM. Yes, sir.

BEND. Where?

TOM. To the theatre, sir. She had a sudden call for re-

hearsal — somebody sick. She told me to tell you as she was werry sorry indeed — werry sorry.

BEND. Why — confound it — I was to breakfast with her ! Why — (*is speechless with vexation*).

[*Knock outside, up R.* TOM *rushes up R., and EXIT R.* That's probably the breakfast. What infernal, confounded, outrageous luck !

[*READY ALFRED to enter up R. C. ENTER TOM with breakfast hamper, which he sets near FIFT's door, L. 3, on a chair. This hamper should contain two bottles of champagne (one may be a dummy), some very fancily done up French chops, a salad dressed in the highest style of art, and other fancy dishes. Rolls, wine-glasses, knives, plates, napkins, etc., for two ; and two bunches of flowers for button-hole and corsage. The salads and fancy dishes may be dummies ; chops, rolls, champagne, and two or three small things should be practical for business.*

(*Looking dubiously at the breakfast.*) What the deuce can I do ?

TOM (*coming down L.*). Ef it wuz me, sir, I'd hop into a cab an' drive to the theatre.

BEND. Good idea. (*Goes up R.*) I'll do it. (*EXIT quickly up R.*)

TOM (*L. C., looking after BENDER*). Ef he'd a seen his ole lady a-goin' out with that there umbrella o' hern, he'd be takin' a cab for the railway station.

[*Knock up R. D. TOM goes up to D. R. and EXIT.*

VOICE (*outside*). Telegram, sir.

TOM (*outside*). Telegram ?

VOICE (*outside*). Yes, sir.

ENTER TOM with telegram, up R.

TOM (*down L. C., reads address*). To Alfred Hastin's, Esq. Ge-Whiffles ! Ef people aint commencin' a-telegraphin' fur

rooms! This here house is gittin' pop'lar. (*Puts envelope in his pocket.*) *ENTER ALFRED hastily, up R.*

ALF. (R. C.). See here, Tom! Miss Bender dropped her bracelet — she thinks it was in this room. Help me look, quick!

TOM (L. C.). Yes, sir.

[*ALFRED and TOM look about on floor.*

ALF. (R., *seeing envelope sticking out of TOM's pocket*). What have you got there?

TOM (L., *quickly handing envelope — innocent and official manner, as if he had just arrived with it*). Telegram for you, sir.

ALF. (*snatching and opening it*). Good Heavens, why didn't you say so!

TOM. I did, sir. I just said so.

[*ALFRED hastily opens, and reads telegram. READY bell, L.*

ALF. Good Heavens!

[*TOM stares at ALFRED an instant.*

TOM (*without emotion*). Anybody dead, sir?

ALF. Yes — we're dead.

TOM. W'en is the funeral?

ALF. You'd better get ready for it now. My aunt is coming home. (*Reads dispatch.*) "Sent from Venice. Mr. Pettibone gone to Hamburg on business. Am coming home with Emily. Must see you. Very important matter. Rosa-belle Pettibone." (*Sits down on chair R., overcome.*)

[*TOM goes and sits on the ottoman, L.*

(*ALFRED suddenly jumps up.*) Here — get me some paper — quick now — no time to waste.

(*ALFRED takes stylographic pen from his pocket.*)

TOM (*jumping up*). Yes, sir! (*Snatches paper, etc., from desk, L. Bus.*) [*READY FIFI, to enter up R.*

ALF. (*seated L. of R. table*). I'll try to stop them. Not much chance, but I'll try. (*Writes quickly, reading aloud.*)

"Mrs. Egbert Pettibone, Venice. In mercy's sake, don't come. Impossible. Dangerous. House — (*Thinks.*) What the devil can I say is the matter with the house?"

TOM. Burnt down.

ALF. Hang it, they'd come all the sooner!

TOM. Blown up. (*Bell L. 2 E.*) Oh, that nervous galoot has ordered more wine. (*TOM rushes off with the two bottles, L. 2 E.*)

ALF. Oh, no — no. Ah! (*Writes rapidly.*) "House just painted. Painter's colic. Pipes burst. Influenza epidemic. Small-pox next door. Alfred." (*Bus.*) Here, quick, Tom!

ENTER TOM L. 2 E.
Telegraph office! (*Rising and hurrying TOM up toward door R.*) Run all the way!

TOM (*starts up R.*). Yes, sir. (*Stops c.*) Pay it, sir?

ALF. No, hang it! Collect.

TOM. Correct! (*EXIT door up R.*)

ALF. They'll never get it. (*Looks at his telegram.*) N — probably started already. Only one thing to do. Get our lodgers out — and Evangeline — and Emily — (*Crosses to L.*) Oh, the deuce! (*Turns to c.*) And how in Heaven's name I am to evict my parents-in-law, is more than I —

ENTER FIFI door up R., coming down L. C., jauntily dressed. A little love of a bonnet, gloves, etc.

(*Aside.*) And here's another one. Oh, Lord, if my aunt should find her here! (*Crosses to R.*) I must get her out first.

FIFI (*L. C., very bright and vivacious.*). Ah, Doctor, how charmed I am to meet you! (*Begins to take off gloves.*)

ALF. (*R. C.*). Thanks, I'm sure.

FIFI. Dear me! (*Imitating his tone.*) "Thanks, I'm sure." Something gone wrong with my fascinating landlord?

ALF. Your fascinating landlord has a confession to make.

FIFI (*in mock alarm, motioning him to stop with one hand,*

and going toward her door). Mercy, please don't, doctor! (*Takes key and unlocks door L. 3.*) At least not until I've had something to sustain me. This dreadful rehearsal made me miss a most delightful breakfast that — (*Sees hamper near her door. Goes to it.*) Ah! (*Delighted.*) Why, it's here! Poor Mr. Bender! (*Laughs merrily.*) He couldn't wait.

ALF. But, my dear Miss Oritanski —

FIFI (*almost screams with sudden idea*). Oh, stop! You shall breakfast with me.

ALF. But, my dear Miss Oritanski —

FIFI. There — there — that will do. That table (*pointing up c.*), bring it down here.

[*Business. FIFI stamps foot. ALFRED does not notice what she says.*]

FIFI. Bring that table here. [ALFRED *drags table down as if not knowing what he is doing, all the time trying to speak. Through the whole scene ALFRED acts as if unconscious of what he is about. No sign of the slightest enjoyment or spirit appears. Acts mechanically.*]

(FIFI *places hamper on ottoman, instantly going to work to get things out, throwing table-cloth to ALFRED.*)

Spread it out — spread it out! [ALFRED *does so.*]
And then you can confess all you like. An immense saving of time. Breakfast — confess — all in one.

ALF. (*R. of the table; going nearer*). But, my dear young lady — (*Back of the ottoman.*)

FIFI (*pushing something into his hand*). Just put that there. (*Flies about. Bus. quick. Vivacious.*)

ALF. (*puts article in wrong place on table, not knowing where*). You don't understand — what I was going to —

FIFI. No, no! not there. There! (*Changes it.*) Oh, dear! you're not much assistance, I must say! That goes there. (*Bus. of putting another article into his hand.*) That's it! You actually got that right!

ALF. (*bus.*). Now, Miss Oritanski, — listen. This is a matter of vital importance.

FIFI. If you want a matter of vital importance, open this (*tossing bottle of champagne to ALFRED, and corkscrew from hamper*).

ALF. (*catches bottle*). But look here, there's no time to lose.

FIFI. Well — I'm not losing any, am I?

ALF. (*aside*). By Jove, I should say not! (*Holds bottle mechanically, as he caught it.*)

FIFI. You're the one that's losing time. Why don't you open it?

ALF. Open what? [FIFI *points to bottle.*
Oh, you want that opened?

FIFI. Of course, Mr. Stupid.

ALF. But first —

FIFI. Nothing first. I won't hear a word, unless you do as I say.

ALF. Oh, Lord! (*Opens bottle as if it were a nuisance.*)

FIFI (*gets chair from up C. and pushes ALFRED into it R. of table; then kneels herself on back of the ottoman close to the L. of table*). That's it! you're coming to your senses at last.

[READY EVANGELINE, to enter up R.

ALF. (*bus. with bottle*). On the contrary, I am losing them.

FIFI.

OTTOMAN.

ALFRED. TABLE.

FIFI. There! (*Finishes setting table.*)

ALF. But you said you'd listen if —

FIFI. There! (*Bus. of delicately giving ALFRED a French chop with her fingers.*) Just try this. It's from Torino's. I know it by the style.

[ALFRED, *confused an instant, holds chop.*

Eat it. You don't know how nice it is.

[ALFRED seated, confused, with the chop in one hand, and champagne bottle in the other.

Pour the wine, why don't you? [ALFRED pours wine in glass. Pour it! Ah, isn't that lovely! You'll feel better in a moment.

ALF. (*aside*). Good Heavens — I must stop this!

ENTER EVANGELINE up R. Stops horrified, on seeing ALFRED and FIFI.

MUSIC. — *Pathetic; sympathetic; pp. again until stop cue.*

FIFI (*holding up glass of champagne*). Happy days, doctor!

ALF. But first —

EVANGELINE.

FIFI.

ALFRED. TABLE. OTTOMAN.

FIFI. No, no! Happy days first! Happy days, doctor! then, perhaps, I'll listen.

ALF. (*quickly, as if to get through with it*). Happy days, then. Any kind of days you like. (*Drinks quickly.*)

[FIFI drains glass.

FIFI. That's just exquisite, isn't it?

ALF. Now, will you listen?

FIFI (*picks up a rose or other flower*). Ah, how sweet! This is for your button-hole. (*Bus. of reaching over to put it in ALFRED'S coat.*)

ALF. (*catching FIFI'S hand*). You must listen, now. I have something to ask you — and you will promise not to refuse me. My happiness depends upon it. It may be my life-long happiness. You will not refuse me when you know how much —

EVAN. (*cries out*). Oh! (*Sinks swooning on chair back of table R.* [ALFRED springs to his feet and looks round.

MUSIC. — *Swell for EVANGELINE; bus. Down again very pp. for dialogue, getting change of effect.*

ALF. (*rising*). Evangeline! (*Hastens to her.*)

FIFI (*aside; not rising*). Ah, a little love episode! (*Goes on with her breakfast tranquilly.*)

ALF. What a cursed coincidence!

FIFI. Yes, doctor. It was unfortunate, I admit.

ALF. Evangeline!

[EVANGELINE *revives. Rises with difficulty. ALFRED tries to assist her, but she will not permit it.*

FIFI (*aside*). I'm almost sorry for the little innocent. (*Drinks champagne cheerfully.*)

[EVANGELINE *walks slowly and weakly toward her door, R. 3. ALFRED again tries to assist her, but she repulses him.*

EVAN. (*bus.; weakly*). No!

ALF. Believe me, I am innocent!

FIFI (*rising from ottoman; aside*). O, yes, they are always innocent.

ALF. You are mistaken, if you think — that I — that we — (*To FIFI.*) Miss Oritanski, I beg you to tell her how it was. [READY JOSEPHINE, *to enter up R.*

FIFI. My dear doctor (*wiping her fingers daintily with napkin, and tossing it down*), I would be charmed to do so — charmed (*moves backward to her door, L. 3*); but there's one quite serious objection — the young lady evidently saw how it was herself. (*EXIT into her room, L. 3.*)

ALF. (*realizing that FIFI has made matters a hundred times worse*). Good Heavens! (*Turns to EVANGELINE in desperation.*) Evangeline! You must listen, my darling.

EVAN. (*at her door, R. 3*). No — I would rather not — now —

ALF. But, my darling, you must hear me! You must listen, Evangeline, for I can explain exactly how — how —

EVAN. Yes, of course you have excuses. But, O Alfred! what difference could it make — what difference could anything make — when I saw (*voice full of emotion*) — the dread-

ful affair — with my own eyes? (*Turns, and EXIT at door R. 3*). [*Stop music.*]

ALF. Oh, this is a crime — this is — this is simply — oh — (*paces back and forth once*). I can't stand it — I — I'll go and walk the streets. (*Starts up R. Stops, listening at door.*) Mrs. Bender! I hear her familiar panting on the stairs. (*Starts down R. Stops.*) I can't meet her now. I'll walk the streets some other time. (*Stops down R.*) I must get this out of the way. (*Moves the table back.*) They'll be sure to look for me in my room. (*Crosses L.*) Dabney's room! That's the thing! [*EXIT L. 2 into DABNEY'S room.*]

DABNEY'S voice heard in incoherent revelry as ALFRED goes in. ENTER JOSEPHINE, door up R., with umbrella; puts it in hat-rack up L. C. Very excited, exhausted, disarranged, dusty, bedraggled, hot, and out of breath. She looks fiercely around the room. Then drops into a chair L. of R. table.

Jos. No one there. Not a sign — not a vestige of the man — or of any one looking for him, excepting me — I was looking for him — tramping up and down around that miserable Arch — in all the heat — and dust — and noise. Oh, there's something at the bottom of all this!

[DABNEY'S voice heard outside L. 2 E.

What can be going on in there? (*Rises to go.*)

[EVANGELINE opens door R. 3 a little.

Is that you, Evangeline? Come here!

[EVANGELINE comes on at R. 3, giving an anxious glance about the room. Her eyes are red from weeping, and she is very pale. Comes down R. of JOSEPHINE.

Why, my child — why Evangeline — what has happened?

[JOSEPHINE rises and meets EVANGELINE.

EVAN. (R. C.). Oh, nothing! (*Wipes a tear away quickly.*)

[READ Y BENDER, to enter up R.

JOS. (L. C.). Where is Alfred?

All the Comforts of Home.

EVANGELINE *tries to speak. Cannot. Shakes head. Suddenly buries head on JOSEPHINE'S breast or shoulder.*

Something has gone wrong. You have quarrelled.

EVAN. (*shakes head negatively; raises head a little*). We have parted — forever. (*Head down again, and stifled sobs.*)

JOS. This is all foolishness. One of you is to blame. If it's Alfred, then he must apologize. If it's you — 'hem — he must apologize just the same.

EVAN. (*shaking head emphatically*). No! I never — want to see him again (*raises head*), mamma. He left me — at the Dickermans' — to look for my lost bracelet — and I found him here — breakfasting with the opera singer. Yes, and worse than breakfasting.

JOS. Worse!

EVAN. Hundreds and hundreds of times worse. He was — he was holding her hands — and telling her — that — that — Oh!

(*Breaks down and sobs on JOSEPHINE'S shoulder.*)

JOS. I must look into this.

EVAN. It won't — do any good — I've looked into it. That was enough.

ENTER BENDER up R., rushing in hurriedly and excitedly.

BEND. (*as he crosses down to L.*). Not at the theatre! Where the dev — Thunder and lightning — my wife! (*Down L.*)

[*JOSEPHINE leads EVANGELINE to door R. 3 in silence, and motions her to go in. EXIT EVANGELINE*

R. 3. *JOSEPHINE turns and faces BENDER.*

(*Trying to command a cheerful tone.*) Ah, my angel! Been out — or just going?

JOS. (*coming back to R. C.*). I have a few words to say to you.

[*BENDER looks a trifle apprehensive. (Taking letter from pocket and extending it toward him.)* Do you see this?

BEND. (L. C. ; *rather weakly*). Oh, yes — I — I see it. (*As JOSEPHINE still holds it out, he takes it.*) Looks like the one you snatched up so nervously this morning.

JOS. (R. C.). It is.

BEND. (L. C.). Ah! May I — read it?

JOS. May you read it?

BEND. (*slight start*). I believe I — suggested —

JOS. (*commandingly*). Read it.

BEND. (L. C. ; *quite subdued*). Yes — that was the idea that I —

[JOSEPHINE motions him. He stops. He reads the letter calmly.]

JOS. (R. C. ; *watching closely. Aside*). He does not move an eye-lash. He is innocent. [BENDER finishes letter. (*Aloud.*) Well?

BEND. Quite amusing, my 'dear. (*Hands her the letter.*) Ha, ha, ha! (*Rather a forced laugh.*)

JOS. Yes, isn't it? Ha, ha, ha! (*Rather a bitter laugh.*)

BEND. I only wish you had gone there.

JOS. I did go there.

BEND. (L.). Ha? You really went? Ha, ha, ha! Then I wish I'd gone.

JOS. (R.). What!

BEND. (*seriously*). No — that is, only to see you, my love — to see you enjoy yourself.

JOS. Oh! (*Though still frowning darkly, she is somewhat mollified. She turns and looks toward ALFRED'S door, R. 1, as if with a new thought. After looking sharply at BENDER.*) Theodore, do you think I do not know who wrote that letter? (*Shaking letter in hand.*)

BEND. (*blankly*). You — you don't say!

JOS. (R.). I do say — and I say that the person is not ten steps from me at this instant.

BEND. (L., *beginning to show considerable alarm, though he turns so that JOSEPHINE does not observe it. Aside.*) My soul!

JOS. Now, shall I tell you why this person wrote it?

BEND. (*thoroughly unnerved and aghast*). Oh — er — perhaps there's no need of going into that, my dear.

JOS. (*hotly*). There is need of going into that. He wrote it, Bender, to get me out of the way, so that he could enjoy a breakfast *tête-à-tête* here with our comic opera young woman (*pointing to L. 3, indignantly*).

BEND. (*aside*). There's no escape from this, but to confess and beg forgiveness. (*Aloud.*) My dear, I shall have to admit —

JOS. I don't want you to admit. I want you to act.

[BENDER *stares with blank face at JOSEPHINE.*

BEND. (*after bus.*). Where would you like to have me act?

JOS. Here!

[BENDER *stares again. Then gives an uncertain glance around the room.*

BEND. (*after bus., weakly*). Here?

[*READY noise; and ALFRED to enter L. 2 E.*

JOS. Here; and now you must see him.

BEND. See — whom?

JOS. Stupid, stupid! Alfred, of course — who wrote this letter — got me out of the way — left Evangeline at the Dickermans', and then came here and breakfasted and flirted with this creature from the theatre. (*Walks about.*)

BEND. (L. C.; *suddenly comprehending*). Eh! (*Looks about savagely.*) My breakfast! My — (*stamps foot in indignation, after seeing the remains of the breakfast.*)

JOS. (R. C.; *turning quickly*). What!

BEND. (*recovering himself and coming down L. C.*). My — son-in-law, I say.

JOS. Isn't it shameful! (*Going up to D. R. 3 E.*)

BEND. (*crossing down R.*). Shameful? It's — it's beyond words.

JOS. (*at door R. 3*). Come here. Evangeline will tell you everything.

BEND. (*going up to L. of JOSEPHINE*). Yes, my dear. (*Aside.*) Saved for the present — but how the deuce will it end? [*Noises as before outside L. 2. ENTER ALFRED L. 2.*

ALF. (*turning and starting quickly toward door up R.*). Now, to get out before —

JOS. (*commandingly, to c.*). Wait!

[*ALFRED stops and stands near L. C. JOSEPHINE motions BENDER to follow, and goes toward ALFRED.*
My husband has something to say to you.

(*Indicates to BENDER to go on.*)

BEND. (*R. of JOSEPHINE; aside; in agony*). If I abuse him, he'll betray me.

JOS. (*c.*). Come, come! [*ALFRED looks away an instant.*

BEND. 'Hem! (*Crosses to ALFRED, trying to assume a severity of attitude and expression.*) Sir —

[*ALFRED turns to BENDER. BENDER instantly melts.*
(*Very meekly.*) Sir — I said — sir —

BENDER.

ALFRED.

JOSEPHINE.

ALF. (*L.*). Well? What is it?

BEND. (*c.; turning to JOSEPHINE*). He wants to know what it is.

JOS. (*R.*). Pooh!

BEND. (*to ALFRED*). Yes, pooh! Now, you mustn't take offence, my boy —

JOS. (*catching BENDER by sleeve or shoulder*). Stop! If you can't do better, I'll interfere.

BEND. (*aside*). Oh — that would end everything! He'd let it all out. (*To ALFRED*). Your — your behavior, sir, was — er —

JOS. (*to BENDER, spitefully*). Outrageous!

BEND. (*rather tamely*). Outrageous.

JOS. (*to BENDER*). Ungentlemanly!

BEND. Um — 'hem! (*Turns to JOSEPHINE*). Eh?

JOS. (*to BENDER*). We are furious at you!

BEND. Yes, we are. (*Tamely.*) Very furious.

JOS. (*speaking directly to ALFRED.*) You ought to be ashamed of yourself — engaged to one lady, and flirting and breakfasting with another.

BEND. (*with sudden animation and seriousness.*) Yes — breakfasting with another — at my ex — er — 'hem! (*Suddenly checks himself.*)

ALFRED *puts both hands on his shoulders, and checks*

BENDER *suddenly.* JOSEPHINE *has turned away for the instant.*

ALF. Mrs. Bender, I have flirted with no one — breakfasted with no one. I simply —

JOS. (*quickly.*) What — you dare to deny it? Mercy on us! Perhaps you will go so far as to deny that you sent me this letter? (*Bus. Crosses to ALFRED.*)

ALF. (L.). Letter? I — sent? (*Looks at JOSEPHINE and then at BENDER.*)

BEND. (R.; *aside.* *Sits on the left corner of R. table.*) Now is my time to die.

JOS. (C.; *pushing letter into ALFRED's hands.*) Take the vile fabrication! Take it!

ALF. (L.; *aside.*) His letter! (*Looks at BENDER.*) Jove! I have an idea — I'll do it! For Evangeline's sake, I'll do it!

JOS. (C.). No wonder you are speechless!

ALF. (L.). No — I can't be expected to say much — under the circumstances.

JOS. Then you did write it?

ALF. (*nonchalantly.*) O yes.

JOS. (*almost a scream of triumph.*) Ah! (*To BENDER.*) I told you!

[BENDER *stands an instant paralyzed.* ALFRED *stands with bowed head.*

(*To BENDER.*) Did you hear what he said? He confessed it!

BEND. Confessed — that — he — ?

JOS. Yes. [BENDER goes to ALFRED precipitately. (Thinking BENDER means to assault ALFRED.) Oh! (Catching BENDER by the arm.)

BEND. (C.; *aside to ALFRED*). You jewel!

JOS. (R.; *seizing hold of BENDER*). No violence, Theodore!

BEND. (to JOSEPHINE). Unhand me, Josephine! This is my affair.

ALF. (L.; *quick aside to BENDER*). That's it! Play the indignant.

BEND. (C.; *violently*). So — you were the cowardly wretch who stooped to such a villainous, underhand trick as this. Fie! — (*Threateningly*.) I say — Fie!

ALF. (*aside to BENDER*). Go on. Fie some more.

JOS. (*aside*). Dear me! I'm afraid Theodore will do him some injury. I must reconcile them.

BEND. Is nothing on earth sacred to you? Neither my stainless past nor the future welfare of my innocent child? (*Advancing upon ALFRED. Very threateningly*.) Have you forgotten that a father's —

JOS. Theodore, you must not forget yourself!

BEND. I will forget myself! I forget everything but the vengeance that is due —

[JOSEPHINE rushes around between the two men, with a cry of alarm.

JOS. (*putting BENDER across to her R.*). No, you shall not hurt him! [TABLEAU.

(C.; *to ALFRED*.) Have you no excuse to offer for your conduct, Alfred? Nothing to say?

ALF. (L.). My dear Mrs. Bender, believe me, I was not taking a breakfast with the lady—I only happened to be there.

BEND. (R.; *aside*). I wish I'd happened to be there.

JOS. (C.). Well, I will try to believe what you say. Time brings all things to light.

BEND. (R.; *aside*). I hope it won't this time.

JOS. (C.). So I will do what I can to reconcile Evangeline. But first you must beg my husband's pardon.

ALF. (L.). What? O yes — of course. (*To BENDER.*) You'll overlook it, I trust?

[BENDER *stands stonily, partly turning his back, and folds his arms.*

JOS. (C.). Theodore, you must forgive him.

BEND. (R.; *shakes head*). He has wronged me too deeply.

[JOSEPHINE, *bus. of putting ALFRED'S hand in BENDER'S, and going up to D. R. 3 E.*

JOS. Now, make up and be friends.

[JOSEPHINE *nods encouragingly, and EXIT into her room, R. 3.*

BEND. (*running up to D. R. 3 E. Calling after JOSEPHINE.*) Don't leave me alone with him — something will happen.

[*Bus. after short pause, of BENDER and ALFRED looking around cautiously, and then falling into each other's arms.*

(*Effusively. Feelingly. Wringing ALFRED'S hands.*) My dear boy, I am overwhelmed with gratitude!

[*READY JOSEPHINE and EVANGELINE, to enter R. 3 E.*

ALF. (L. C., *drily*). Well, by Jove, you ought to be! She'd have torn you limb from limb.

BEND. (R. C.). Is there anything I can do for you in return?

ALF. Certainly. That's the precise reason I've done all this. You must do something in return.

BEND. (R.). What is it?

ALF. (L.). Move out of the house with your family this very day.

BEND. What? Move — move out?

ALF. And not only that, but you must persuade the opera singer to go. She's paid her rent, so I can't do anything. But you can.

BEND. You're mad, my boy!

ALF. (L.). Not in the least—but I will be if you don't go.

BEND. (R.). But how am I to —

ENTER JOSEPHINE with EVANGELINE, R. 3.

JOSEPHINE. Here she is, Alfred, ready to make peace with you.

[EVANGELINE, *with eyes downcast, down R. C.* ALFRED *crosses to* EVANGELINE. BENDER *joins* JOSEPHINE *up L. C.*

ALF. (*going to* EVANGELINE). Evangeline, I hope your mother has convinced you that there was a mistake.

EVAN. I knew there was a mistake—of some kind. (EVANGELINE, *after a short struggle with herself, gives* ALFRED *her hand.*) I will try to forget it, Alfred, but I could not remain in the house—it would be impossible while that dreadful person is permitted to live here.

ALF. and BEND. What! (*They exchange glances.*)

EVAN. Oh, yes, she must go away! Papa will have to see that she does it. And until then we will take rooms at the hotel near the corner of Southgate Street. It isn't far, you know.

ALF. (*aside*). By Jove—if this isn't luck!

EVAN. (*crosses to* ALFRED *and goes up C.*). Mamma and I have arranged it all—and I'm going over there now to engage the rooms. Perhaps—perhaps you would like to come with me.

ALF. (*going up to* EVANGELINE). I shall be delighted. (*Goes up R. to* EVANGELINE.) Ah, Evangeline! (*Near door; gets hold of her hand.*) You must believe me innocent of any—

EVAN. (*finger to lips*). Sh! (*Points to FIFI'S room.*)

ALF. Oh, the deuce!

[*EXEUNT* EVANGELINE and ALFRED, *door up R.*

JOS. (*down R. C.*). Well—you see what must be done. I could not pacify Evangeline in any other way. The woman must be got rid of.

BEND. (*down L. C.*). But it can't be done, my dear — she's paid in advance.

[JOSEPHINE *makes a slight start.* *She gives BENDER a quick look.* BENDER *starts.* *Looks alarmed.*

JOS. (*sternly*). How do you know that?

BEND. The fact is, Josephine, Alfred himself just spoke to me about getting her to leave. He asked me to — to help him arrange it.

JOS. Oh, he did! (*Thinks.*) Then we must do it.

BEND. All very well to say — but how? That's the question.

JOS. If I only had some excuse, I could very soon make her pack up.

BEND. Oh, yes. If you had some excuse. (*Slight sneer.*)

JOS. (*with sudden idea*). Ah! (*Nods her head as if it would do.*) Theodore, you shall furnish me one.

BEND. I? How can I —

JOS. By making love to her.

BEND. (*in an injured tone*). Oh, my dear!

JOS. No nonsense, now! It is just the thing, and we will do it at once. (*Glances around as if surveying the room.*) You must meet her here — in this room — alone. You must be very attentive — in fact, affectionate.

BEND. (*L. C.*). Heavens, Josephine, what do you —!

JOS. (*R. C.*). Sh! You can do it. In the meantime I will use that small ladder and observe the whole affair from the transom there, over our door. (*Points to D. R. 3 E.*)

BEND. (*aside; alarmed*). My soul!

[READY FIFI, *to enter L. 3 E.*

JOS. At the proper time — just when it has gone far enough — I will scream, rush in, and make such a scene that the creature will be glad to escape with her life.

BEND. (*aside*). I'll be glad to escape with mine.

JOS. (*going, taking the hamper off ottoman, and placing it on chair, R., between the doors*). This will work beautifully.

BEND. (*crosses down R. ; aside*). Great Cæsar! The opera singer will betray me.

JOS. (*up L. Bus.*). I read of just such a case in a book, and it worked beautifully. (JOSEPHINE *knocks at FIFI's door, L. 3.*)

BEND. (R., *to JOSEPHINE*). Hold on — what — what are you doing?

JOS. (*hurrying across to R. 3 E.*). You have simply to do as I told you — leave the rest to me.

(*EXIT R. 3, shutting the door after her carefully.*)

BEND. (*going up and down C.*). Heavens and earth and — and the other place — I'm in for it now!

[JOSEPHINE *appears at the transom over door R. 3, opening it.*

JOS. (*at transom*). Now, be careful.

BEND. (C., *with deep meaning*). I will.

ENTER FIFI from her room, L. 3.

FIFI (*looking from door L. 3 E., inquiringly*). Did any one knock? (*She sees BENDER. Speaks very sweetly.*) Oh, Mr. Bender, are you there? (*Coming down slowly in front of ottoman.*)

BEND. (C.). Yes, I'm here. (*A glance of misery to R.*) I thought — perhaps — you'd join in a little — er — chat —

FIFI (L.). A chat? Oh, certainly. Nothing could be more charming. (*Aside.*) How awkward the man is.

(*FIFI sits L. C. on ottoman, facing to L.*)

BEND. (*going round at back of ottoman, to L. Seating himself L. of FIFI*). Now, if she'll only keep quiet about the breakfast — and the dressmaker's bill!

Ottoman.

FIFI.

BENDER.

FIFI (*laughs out merrily*). Why, Mr. Bender, what is the matter with you to-day? You don't seem like the same man I —

[*READY McSNATH, to enter up R.*

BEND. (*quickly*). 'Hem — 'hem — (*coughs to cover up her*

remark). Oh, nothing, my dear! I dare say you've heard me going about whistling and — and — carolling with joy; but you know we have different moods.

FIFI. Perhaps you have had a little matrimonial scene with Mrs. Bender, eh?

BEND. No — no — impossible! We are like turtle doves.

FIFI. Dear me! I didn't know that turtle doves suffered so much. (*Laughs lightly.*)

JOS. (*aside*). Oh, the little fiend!

FIFI (*archly*). What do you think the other turtle dove would say if she saw this turtle dove sitting here with me?

BEND. (*confused.*) Ahem — I —

[JOSEPHINE motions him to go on. BENDER nods to his wife, and suddenly takes FIFI's hand.

Ah, my dear young lady —

FIFI (*smiling*). There — now you're more like yourself again.

BEND. (*jumping half up, and trying to cover up FIFI's remark*). Ah, 'hem — yes — as you say — the — er — weather is more like itself again. (*He still has her hand.*)

ENTER AUGUSTUS MCSNATH abruptly, door up R. He stops R., and stands looking at BENDER. JOSEPHINE begins to motion to BENDER violently, from the transom. BENDER finally sees her, and looks up R. Seeing MCSNATH, he instantly drops FIFI's hand, and starts back. FIFI looks around and sees MCSNATH, but is perfectly composed.

FIFI. Ah, we have an audience.

MCSNATH (*to C.; stops on seeing the situation*). Beg pardon, my name is McSnath.

BEND. (L.). Is it?

MCSN. (C.; suspiciously looking at BENDER). It is — I said it was.

BEND. Well, I didn't say it wasn't.

FIFI.

OTTOMAN.

BENDER.

McSNATH.

McSN. I didn't say you did. [Pause.

JOS. (*motioning to BENDER. Loud whisper. Aside to him*).
Get him away — get him away.

McSN. I'm an old friend of Mr. Pettibone. We haven't met for years.

BEND. Don't say?

McSN. I do say. I said we hadn't met —

BEND. I heard you.

McSN. Is he at home?

BEND. No.

McSN. I'm sorry.

BEND. So am I.

McSN. Stayed over a day, just to see my dear old Pettibone.

BEND. Well, there's no such a person as your dear old Pettibone here. [McSNATH looks suspiciously at BENDER.

McSN. (*aside*). Something out of the way going on. Very suspicious looking — I'll hunt him up, and tell him about it. He ought to know. [READY noise of falling step-ladder.

BEND. Good-day, sir.

McSN. I'll call again.

BEND. We shall enjoy a visit from you at any time.

[McSNATH goes up R. Turns at door and looks back.

BENDER keeps his eye on McSNATH. EXIT McSNATH, door up R.

(Takes FIFI's hand passionately.) Thank Heaven, he's gone! You dear little — (*starts back; aside*). Oh, Lord! I forgot my wife. (*Sinks on seat beside FIFI*).

JOS. (*aside*). He's doing splendidly now.

FIFI. Oh, Mr. Bender, you must excuse me for not waiting breakfast for — [READY ALFRED to enter up R.

BEND. (*bus.; sudden endeavor to interrupt*). Ah, ahem! (*At the same time seizing a book from table or chair near at*

hand, and throwing it on floor.) Yes. (*Seizes her hand.*)
No words can express it. [*FIFI stares in surprise.*]

JOS. (*aside*). What is the matter with the man?

FIFI. And after you had been so good about the dress-maker's little —

BEND. (*bus. as before, only still more excited. This time, he sends a vase crashing to the floor. Rises, and exclaims in a loud voice, to drown FIFI's remarks*). Oh — ah — yes — my dear! Have you ever seen this album — ahem? (*Bus. seizing a portfolio from desk, L., throwing several books down, and opening it suddenly before FIFI. BENDER stands trembling, and wipes perspiration from his brow.*)

FIFI (*aside*). I wonder if he's been drinking! (*She glances at the book which BENDER shoved before her. Aloud.*) Why, that isn't an album, Mr. Bender!

[*READY TOM and EVANGELINE, to enter up R.*]

BEND. Eh? (*Snatches it away.*) Oh! (*Aside.*) This is killing me. The only way is to plunge in, and bring matters to a climax. (*Aloud; sinking and kneeling beside FIFI, and putting his arm around her.*) Miss Oritanski — I cannot conceal the beating of my heart — I cannot hide from you the fact, guilty though it is, that I love —

MUSIC, comedy dramatic music with element of confusion and hurry in it. Play pp. for dialogue.

ENTER ALFRED up R. hastily, anticipating cue a little. He stops an instant in astonishment, C.

BENDER sees ALFRED, and signs to him frantically to go away.

ALF. (*C.; coming into room quickly*). Look here, Bender, you must be crazy! I can't get you out of another scrape as I did with that confounded letter of yours, by taking it on myself —

[*BENDER jumps up with shout of alarm. JOSEPHINE utters a ghastly shriek, and disappears from transom R. 3. Sound outside R. 3, of crash, bang, and*

clatter of falling step-ladder ; and at same time door R. 3 opens, and JOSEPHINE falls swooning into the room C., with ladder fallen partly in door near her. FIFI screams and runs to her door L. 3 where she stands frightened.

FIFI (L. 3 E.). His wife !

[TOM rushes on at door up R. EVANGELINE runs on at door up R. and falls on her knees by JOSEPHINE, with exclamation of alarm. *READY* curtain.

EVAN. (R. C. ; bus.). Oh, what is it, mamma ?

TOM up C.

ALFRED.

FIFI.

EVANGELINE. JOSEPHINE, on stage.

Ottoman.

BENDER.

ALF. Good Heavens, what have I done !

BEND. You've wrecked the entire family.

TOM. (up C.). Ge-Whiffles ! Now, he'll get all the comforts of home.

MUSIC. Forte for curtain. Stop on curtain down. RING curtain.

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE. Same as in Act I. BENDER is discovered up R., sitting on the bottom stair, with his head buried in his hands as if in mental agony, and in such a way that he does not at first attract attention. READY ALFRED and EVANGELINE, to enter R. 3 E.

BEND. It was kind of Alfred and Evangeline to intercede for me — but — (*shaking head*) — no use — no use. (*Turns up sadly. Speaks meditatively, in a low voice.*) My wife — was never in such a state — before — never.

ENTER ALFRED and EVANGELINE R. 3, with a subdued quietness as if a dead body lay in the room. They close the door quietly and carefully. BENDER turns to them, looking for a gleam of hope.

(*Low voice.*) Well?

[*All come forward. READY JOSEPHINE, to enter R. 3 E.*

ALF. (C.; *shakes head*). She won't listen to anything.

EVAN. (R.). We reasoned with her all we could, papa.

[BENDER L.

EVAN. (R.). She is going to move to the hotel, and has already ordered the trunks taken over. She — she is to meet a lawyer there at four o'clock.

BEND. (L.). A lawyer?

[EVANGELINE and ALFRED nod sadly.

ALF. (C.). Yes — Tom has gone out to bring one.

BEND. And — what did she say — about me?

EVAN. and ALF. Nothing.

[BENDER repeats "nothing" with his lips alone — no sound. He looks at ALFRED. ALFRED shakes his head.

EVAN. Oh papa — if a divorce could be avoided ! (*She puts her head down on ALFRED'S shoulder to hide her tears.*)

BEND. (*after pause*). And — you really think she would be so cruel — so heartless as to — !

MUSIC. A sweet, sad strain, *pp.* “*con espressione.*”
Play a few bars for JOSEPHINE'S entrance ; then stop.

ENTER JOSEPHINE R. 3. BENDER, seeing JOSEPHINE, breaks off with “*Ahem*” and a cough, and looks wandringly toward other parts of the room.

JOS. (*down between ALFRED and BENDER*). I am glad, children, that you are alone, for I have something to say.

[BENDER turns slowly and looks at JOSEPHINE in ghastly astonishment. ALFRED looks at JOSEPHINE in surprise also.

EVAN. (*crosses to JOSEPHINE*). But, mamma dear — we're not alone.

JOS. (L. c.). Indeed ! (*Looks about room.*) I fail to see any one else.

BEND. (L. *aside*). I must be growing thin.

JOS. I wished to inform you that I have decided not to go home, but to find some quiet watering-place where no prying eyes will intrude upon my widow's sorrow.

BEND. (*suddenly breaking out*). Oh, look here ! This is going a little — a — a —

[JOSEPHINE looks sternly and coldly at BENDER, freezing him into silence. BENDER is frozen. *Bus.*

JOS. (L. c. ; turning to EVANGELINE). It is singular that a stranger should have the audacity to address us.

EVAN. (R. c.). A stranger, mamma ?

JOS. I said a stranger. (*Darts an indignant glance at BENDER. BENDER quails, L.*) You will of course come with me, Evangeline, and you, Alfred, must join us as soon as you can. Then the whole family will be united again.

ALF. (R. ; rather timidly). And — and your husband — ?

JOS. My husband — my — ? (*Stops and stands as if holding back tears.*) We will sometimes think of him. He was a man who had some good qualities.

EVAN. (*with new hope ; eagerly.*) Yes, mamma.

JOS. But they were few and far between.

BEND. (*forgetting himself again.*) Josephine, you'll do me the credit of —

[*Bus. of glance as before, stopping BENDER in the midst of his line. BENDER again frozen.*]

JOS. I wish to do justice to the memory of one who has passed away.

BEND. (*aside.*) Thunder and lightning ! This is not pleasant at all. (*Walks about and down on the L.*)

JOS. I wish this person wouldn't disturb us. (*Going to D. R. 3 E. After looking at BENDER an instant, turns to EVANGELINE.*) Evangeline, my child, you had better go over to our rooms at the hotel for the present. I will come soon. (*Crosses to door.*)

EVAN. (C.). Yes, mamma.

[*BENDER stops pacing and looks at them. EVANGELINE looks uncertainly at BENDER. Slight pause.*]

JOS. (*up R. ; to EVANGELINE. Speaks with a cold, calm voice.*) Children, if you desire to take leave of your former father, I have no objection. (*Goes slowly off R. 3.*)

[*Slight pause. All three draw long breaths.*]

BEND. (L.). There goes my widow.

ALF. (*crosses to BENDER, L. Sympathetically.*) Yes (*taking BENDER'S hand and pressing it*), so far as I see, you're a dead man. (*Crosses back to R.*)

[*READY Mrs. PETTIBONE and EMILY, to enter up R.*]

BEND. (*to EVANGELINE.*) Evangeline (*EVANGELINE to the R. of BENDER*), you received permission to take a last look at the remains. (*Holds out hand to EVANGELINE.*)

EVAN. (R. C. ; *going quickly to BENDER and embracing him.*) Oh, papa, I am so sorry !

BEND. (L. C.). Thank you! Thank you!

EVAN. (*looks round to R. 3; then more confidentially*). You shall come with me to the hotel, and we will try to think of some way to appease her. (*Urges BENDER up R.*)

[BENDER *goes up R. with* EVANGELINE. ALFRED *crosses to L.*

BEND. (*up R.; turning at door up R.*). Alfred, my boy, let me know when I am to be buried.

EVAN. (*up R. Shocked. As they go off*). Oh!

[*EXEUNT* EVANGELINE and BENDER, *door up R.*

ALF. (L.; *sits on ottoman; laughs a little.*) Poor papa Bender! Heaven only knows how he'll get out of this scrape. But I've got my own affairs to get out of — I can't be expected to worry about his. Thank the Lord, the house is nearly empty — and yet — that telegram! It gives me the cold shivers when I think of it. Oh, nonsense! They'd be here before this if they were coming. I dare say they got my dispatch. That ought to stop them.

[*He starts toward door up R. Seeing* MRS. PETTIBONE and EMILY *enter, he drops down R., and sits in chair L. of R. table. ENTER door up R.,* MRS. PETTIBONE and EMILY, *in travelling rig, carrying satchels, parcels, etc. They come in very abruptly, and see ALFRED at once. They put down satchels, etc., up C. on table.*

MRS. P. Ah, Alfred! (*She goes down to ALFRED, and crosses to L.*)

EMILY. Is that —? (*She goes to R. of ALFRED.*) Why, so it is!

MRS. P. Yes, here he is — as large as life.

[*Bus. of* MRS. PETTIBONE and EMILY *shaking his hands. ALFRED'S arms hang limp.*

EMILY (C.). Goodness! What's the matter with him? He must be asleep. Here! Wake up! (*She shakes him.*)

[ALFRED *recovers himself, R. C.*

All the Comforts of Home.

ALF. Oh — yes — how-dy'-do? Glad to see you.

EMILY (*going up c.*). Well, it's about time!

MRS. P. (L.). You received our telegram, of course?

ALF. (R. C.; *quickly*). Yes — but you didn't get mine?

EMILY (*up c.*). Yours? No.

ALF. And I sent it "collect."

MRS. P. What did you say in it?

ALF. I told you not to — oh — well — it's of no consequence now, you know.

EMILY (*up c.*). You told us — not to —?

ALF. Not to — er — delay a moment. (*Aside.*) Hang it, I hate to lie like that!

[EMILY *up c.*; MRS. PETTIBONE L.]

EMILY } (*relieved*). Oh!
MRS. P. }

MRS. P. And, now, Alfred, it is best for you to know at once why we are here, without my husband's knowledge, for it concerns you and Emily very deeply — very deeply.

[ALFRED *looks at ladies anxiously.*]

EMILY (*coming down c.*). Oh, mamma, dear, you're making such a tragic affair out of it!

MRS. P. (L.; *cuttingly*). Indeed! Perhaps you can break the intelligence with more levity?

EMILY (C.; *going to ALFRED on his L.; laughing*). I'm sure there's no breaking about it. You see, Alfred — cousin Alfred (*laughs*), you and I have been about half or three-quarters engaged to each other for some time. Now, although we're very fond of each other — aren't we? — still, we both know it isn't exactly the kind required.

[ALFRED *says nothing.*]

I know you do — and I know I do — so, don't you think it is about time the engagement was — 'hem — (*burlesque comedy gesture*) frustrated?

ALF. (R. C.; *rising; suddenly seizing EMILY'S hand*). You don't mean it!

EMILY (C.; *laughing; turning to* MRS. PETTIBONE). See that? What did I tell you! The boy is so delighted, he hasn't the politeness to conceal it.

ALF. Oh, no!

EMILY. Oh, yes! And I really believe (*an idea coming to her. Slowly raises her finger and points it at him*)—Alfred! You have been falling in love, too!

ALF. Too!

EMILY (*catching herself*). Oh! (*Hand over mouth an instant*). [READY DABNEY, to enter L. 2 E.

ALF. Then you—then she—ha, ha, ha! (*Looks from one to the other. Both nod their heads affirmatively.*) Really! Ha, ha! Bless you! I congratulate you. (*Seizing EMILY's hand, and then, in his enthusiasm, MRS. PETTIBONE's also.*) I—I—oh, this is joyful! ha, ha, ha! (*Falling in chair L. of R. table.*)

EMILY (C.). Well—upon my word! (*Going up C., piqued.*)

ALF. Who is the unfortunate man? (*Rises.*)

EMILY and MRS. P. (*together*). What!

ALF. No, fortunate, of course—ha, ha, ha! We must be friends. I'll treat him royally—a drive—down the Strand—o' na'bus—Aquarium—(*etc., for London local gags*). Why don't you tell me his name? (*Up to EMILY.*)

[MRS. PETTIBONE and EMILY have been in vain trying to stop the flow of ALFRED's enthusiasm.]

MRS. P. and EMILY. Victor Smythe.

ALF. Ha—Vic—(*aside*). By George!

MRS. P. (*up to EMILY and ALFRED*). Yes; he has been devoted to Emily for a long time; but for some reason, your uncle seems to have a particular aversion to the young man.

ALF. (*meaningly*). Yes—he has.

MRS. P. I have done all I could to smooth matters over.

[ALFRED smothers a laugh. ENTER DABNEY

from his room, L. 2, towel around his head, nursing his head still, and in evident misery.

Why, who is that person ?

EMILY (*seeing DABNEY*). Dear me !

ALF. That — ah — yes ! You mean — oh ! That ? (*Speaks confidentially.*) Poor fellow, he has seen better days. A victim of cruel misfortune — drunken wife — starving children — and all that. I took pity on him. He helps me, 'hem — keep the house in order. (*Aside.*) That's true.

[DABNEY *sinks on ottoman*, L. C.]

MRS. P. (*pityingly*). How sad the poor fellow seems.

EMILY. Yes — but come, mamma ; it would hardly do to have Mr. Smythe find us looking like this.

ALF. Smythe ! He isn't coming here !

MRS. P. Yes — we sent word to him from the station.

[ALFRED *gives a look of resignation*. DABNEY *catches sight of the ladies, and rises quickly, hurriedly trying to arrange his collar and conceal the towel he had against his head.*

DAB. (*rises to L. C.*). I most humbly crave pardon. I was not aware there were ladies present.

MRS. P. (*going to DABNEY*). Ah — do not speak of it, dear sir. We know all. (*Goes up.*)

[DABNEY *astonished*. ALFRED *picks up book or paper, and watches bus. over the top of it.*

EMILY (*down to R. of DABNEY*). Yes — and you mustn't be down-hearted. Things will be better by-and-by. (*Goes up.*)

DAB. (*involuntary motion toward head*). I hope so, I'm sure.

MRS. P. (*down R. of DABNEY. Suddenly putting money into DABNEY'S hand.*) Pray accept that. Only a trifle, but it may relieve you. (*She quickly goes up to door L. 3, and EXIT.*)

[DABNEY, *overcome with surprise, turns and watches her off.* READY PETTIBONE, *to enter up R.*

EMILY (*down R. of DABNEY. Impulsively. Same bus. of giving DABNEY money*). For your starving little ones. (*Goes quickly up to door L. 3, and EXIT*.)

ALFRED *sits L. of R. table.* DABNEY, *bus. of amazement.* He *watches EMILY off L. 3 E.* DABNEY *goes to ALFRED in a state of blank astonishment.* ALFRED *has picked up book or paper, which he pretends to be reading as he stands up R. c.*

DAB. (*looking at money in his hands*). What does all this mean?

ALF. (*looking up from book*). All what, mean?

DAB. (L. c.). Why did they give me money for my starving children?

ALF. (R. c.). Who?

DAB. Those ladies.

ALF. (*looking around room*). What ladies?

DAB. (L. c.). Who were here a moment ago.

ALF. (*shakes head*). Haven't been any ladies here. (*Resumes perusal of book.*)

DAB. Ha! (*Bus. Rubs eyes. Feels head. Looks at money.*) Perhaps I'd better go out and get some air.

ALF. Yes, do. (*Moves down near chair, R.*)

[DABNEY *goes up R. Just as he gets near stairway, the door up R. opens, and he stands back a little.*

ENTER MR. PETTIBONE, *door up R. hurriedly.*
He *sees ALFRED at once.*

PET. Ugh! Alfred! (*He is evidently laboring under great excitement. Mechanically tosses his umbrella, rugs, etc., to DABNEY, without looking at him, and comes down R. c.*)

[DABNEY *catches the articles thrown to him, and stands an instant in still deeper and blanker bewilderment. Puts hand to head. Blinks. Then turns and EXIT door up R., carrying the luggage in his arms.*

ALF. (*aside*). Merciful powers! (*Drops into chair.*)

All the Comforts of Home.

PET. (L.; *going up and putting hat and coat on hat rack*).
You didn't expect to see me, I dare say.

ALF. (R.; *face indicating that this is the end of everything*).
O yes — I thought you'd come.

[PETTIBONE, *coming down, shakes ALFRED'S hand very hurriedly, and without show of feeling*. ALFRED *rises meekly for bus. of shaking hands*.

PET. (L. C.). I came here to sell this house.

[READY EMILY and MRS. PETTIBONE, *to enter*
L. 3 E. .

ALF. (R. C.; *gasps*). Sell it!

PET. Yes — sell it — sell it. I will never live in the neighborhood. What do you think? Letters have come to her — while we were away. I am going to dispose of everything I own — everything — and then take her to America — or some other half-civilized country. I'll see you again in a moment — I must draw up some papers regarding the sale, and put them in the hands of my attorney. (*Goes toward L.*)

ALF. Yes — of course. Ahem! Where did you leave the family?

PET. The family? Don't ask — no matter. (*Goes L. Turns again.*) Venice — I believe it was. I told them I was going to Hamburg on business. That was a lie. (*EXIT L. 2.*)

ALF. (*sits on ottoman L.; aside*). This is the finishing stroke. It doesn't make any difference what happens now. Things have gone beyond me — but there's (*rises*) Emily and

[READY knock up R.
Auntie. I'll warn them. (*Goes to door L. 3.*) It may do some good yet. (*Knocks on door L. 3. Speaks in low voice.*)
Say — you two — come out, quick. *To C.*)

ENTER EMILY and MRS. PETTIBONE L. 3. ALFRED *signs them to be quiet*. EMILY *comes down*
R. of ALFRED. MRS. PETTIBONE L.

EMILY and MRS. P. What's the matter, Alfred?

ALF. (C.). Sh — Uncle's here!

EMILY and MRS. P. What!

[READY MCSNATH, to enter up R.

ALF. Just arrived. Going to sell the house. Fact is, the reason he has been going on so lately is that he thinks this Smythe chap has been paying attentions to you (*indicating MRS. PETTIBONE*).

MRS. P. (L.). Me! ME! [Both ladies surprised.

EMILY (R.; *indignantly*). The idea!

MRS. P. Emily, I have said all along that this concealment was perfectly absurd. Now I shall have a talk with Mr. Pettibone. Alfred, do hurry to Mr. Smythe's lodgings, 251 Wells Court Road, and tell him not to come here on any account, until I send him word.

ALF. Very well. (*Goes up R. Turns to them.*) Lock yourself in that room — don't stir until I get back. (*EXIT, door up R.*) [Door of L. 2 opens.

EMILY (*seeing door L. 2 open*). Oh — it's papa!

MRS. P. Hurry!

[MRS. PETTIBONE and EMILY run hastily into room L. 3, and close and lock the door.

ENTER PETTIBONE, door L. 2, with papers, etc., and plasters.

PET. Alfred! (*Looks about; sees that ALFRED is not there.*) What has the boy been doing? I never saw such horrible confusion in my life. Everything upside down. Full of medicine-bottles, plasters, music-scores — (*throwing plasters off L. 2 E.; going R.*). I can't do any work there. (*Crosses to R.*) [A knock on door up R.

(PETTIBONE stops.) Who is it?

ENTER MCSNATH, door up R., comes down L. C.

McS. (L. C.). Ah! My dear Pettibone! I'm glad to find you at last. (*MCSNATH comes down to PETTIBONE and stops.*)

PET. (R. C.). Find me? What do you — who are you?

McS. Why, McSnath — your ancient friend McSnath. You haven't forgotten? (*Holds out hand.*)

PET. (*shaking McSNATH's hand mechanically, and dropping it at once.*) Oh, McSnath. Ancient friend. Yes. Glad to see you — sit down. (*Goes R., absently.*)

[McSNATH *astonished. Follows PETTIBONE with eyes.*

McS. (*sits L. of R. table; aside.*) Odd sort of welcome this is, I must say. Something's wrong with him. (*Aloud.*) You've been out of town, I believe?

PET. (*extreme R.*). Eh? Oh — yes — yes — I believe so.

McS. I called here only a short time ago.

PET. Yes — I dare say you did.

McS. I did. That's what I say. And although I didn't find you at home, I had the pleasure of seeing your wife.

PET. (*suddenly aroused. Turns.*) Eh!

McS. (*aside.*) Ah! That's what is troubling him. (*Rises and crosses to L.*)

PET. (*R. C.*). You say you saw —?

McS. (*L. C.*). My dear friend — calm yourself; but take my advice and don't go off on a journey again.

PET. What are you talking about?

McS. Now, be calm, I say! No wonder her behavior enrages you.

PET. Ah! (*Quick exclamation.*) How do you know that?

McS. Good Heavens! Couldn't I see?

PET. See what?

McS. What was going on a couple of hours ago — in this room. Your wife seated there — enjoying the society of a gentleman, and, from all appearances, enjoying it very much.

PET. (*half choking in effort to stop McSNATH.*) Aw — gig — stop! Nonsense! Absurd! I left my wife in Venice — day before yesterday. Venice! Do you hear? (*PETTIBONE walks about savagely.*)

[*READY knock, and SMYTHE to enter up R.*

McS. (*glances about room, having gone up to luggage on table up c.*) Oh, you did! (McSNATH *moves about slowly.*)

PET. (*up R. c.*). Yes, I did.

McS. (*up L. c., picking up shawls or satchels up c.*). Whose are these?

[*PETTIBONE turns and looks. Rushes up and seizes luggage, looking wildly at it.*

PET. (*screams, dropping things on table*). Ah — !

McS. Venice, I think you said?

PET. (*choking with rage*). What does — who — ah — where — Oh — I'll sift this thing to the bottom now! (*Walks about excitedly.*) The bottom! The bottom!

McS. That's right. The bottom.

PET. (*suddenly seizes McSNATH's hand*). Old friend — you will stand by me? Say you will.

McS. I will.

NOTE. *Play very rapidly from here to end of the act. They wring each other's hands. A knock at door up R., both looking up suspiciously.*

PET. Come in!

ENTER VICTOR SMYTHE door up R. He comes into room inquiringly.

SMYTHE (R. c.). I beg pardon —

PET. (c.; yell). Ah! (*Rushes toward SMYTHE, who retreats to R. of R. table.*) There he is! By what right do you enter this house? Answer, before I strangle you where you stand!

SMYTHE. Really, sir — I — I came in response to a request from a — lady.

PET. Say it! Say it, sir! From my wife!

SMYTHE. It was the lady I once supposed to be your wife —

PET. Ah! (*As if faint.*) A chair!

[*McSNATH assists him to ottoman.*

SMYTHE (R.). I'm really very sorry, sir. I had no idea it would affect you so painfully, considering that you never were married to her —

PET. (*springing up to c. Bus.*) What do you mean? Never married — Who the devil told you that?

SMYTHE (R.). T'was your servant who gave me the distressing information. [*READY BENDER, to enter up R.*]

PET. Servant! (*Stamps about up and down R.*) Which servant? The scoundrel! It's the most scandalous falsehood ever breathed.

SMYTHE. Falsehood? Falsehood? Oh, sir, this makes me very happy.

PET. (C.; *coming and facing SMYTHE*). Oh, sir! It doesn't make me happy at all. (*Stamps about.*) I'll — I'll get a divorce — a divorce, do you hear? — and then you can marry the woman, for all I care.

SMYTHE (*alarmed*). I — ?

PET. You! You! You! As you've been paying her such infernally devoted attentions —

McS. (L.; *aside to PETTIBONE; interrupting quickly*). No, no! That wasn't the one.

PET. Not the one?

McS. No. It was another man.

PET. What! Is there another? My soul! (*Walks about more excited than ever.*)

[*SMYTHE goes up in time to be behind D. up R. as BENDER enters and squeezes him between door and wall. SMYTHE, during the following scene, stares and blinks in bewilderment, and is mainly occupied in trying to keep out of the way of others who rush about in excitement. He backs timidly from one place to another, gets behind chairs, etc.*]

Why doesn't he come, so that I can kill him? Why —

ENTER BENDER, door up R.

McS. (L.; *seeing BENDER*). There! There he is! That is the one!

PET. (L. C.). Ha! That?

[MCSNATH nods. PETTIBONE rushes at BENDER as he comes down R. C. They meet up R. C.]

So, sir! You are here!

BEND. (C.). I seem to be. What of it?

PET. (L. C.). This of it! I want your life! I'll have satisfaction out of you! Satisfaction — you hear?

BEND. What for?

PET. I am the husband of the lady you have made love to. Now, do you understand?

BEND. You have made a mistake — my name is Bender.

PET. You'd better change it to Breaker. This good friend of mine came in here this morning, and saw you sitting there by her side. [READY ALFRED, to enter up R.]

BEND. (aside). Thunder and lightning!

PET. Now, sir! I shall call you to account, sir!

BEND. I'm happy to hear it, sir. And while we talk of accounts, since you are the lady's husband, you can pay this little dressmaker's bill for your wife. (Pulls out bill.)

PET. (in high whining key). What — my wife — has allowed you to pay her debts? (Paces floor in agony.)

BEND. (showing bill into PETTIBONE'S hand). There's the receipt — can't you read? [PETTIBONE seizes the bill.]

PET. (L. C.). Ha, ha, ha! A pretty game! It says (beating finger on bill excitedly) Fifi Oritanski. My wife's name is Pettibone.

BEND. (R. C.). It doesn't matter — she's probably called herself that, as Pettibone was such a d——d ugly name.

PET. (in high rage). Ha! (Paces about.)

[BENDER paces about excitedly also.]

I'll have no more words!

[READY MRS. PETTIBONE, to enter L. 3 E.]

BEND. Neither will I! [Bus. of both threatening, etc.]

NOTE. — Use great care to avoid carrying this scene to burlesque. It must be kept entirely natural, and played without exaggeration.

All the Comforts of Home.

ENTER ALFRED, hurrying in door up R. SMYTHE, on ALFRED'S entrance, runs with fright up the staircase, and returns in a moment to up C.

ALF. (*coming down*). Smythe wasn't — (*Sees PETTIBONE, BENDER, etc., and turns at once, going toward door up R.*)

PET. (*rushing and catching ALFRED*). Here — here — stop! (*Brings ALFRED down.*) I demand an explanation. An explanation. [*BENDER sits L. of R. table.*

My wife — my wife is here.

ALF. (R. C.). You've seen her, then!

[*PETTIBONE, L. C. ; MCSNATH, L. ; BENDER, R., seated.*

PET.	}	(<i>a subdued exclamation together</i>). Ah!
MCSN.		
BEND.		

[*MCSNATH crosses up behind to up C.*

ALF. (*going to door L. 3, knocks*). Come out, auntie — he knows you're here.

[*PETTIBONE takes the C. Sound of unlocking door.*

ENTER MRS. PETTIBONE, door L. 3. ALFRED crosses at back over to R., and sits R. of R. table.

MRS. P. (*motioning back to EMILY outside L. 3. Wait until I've spoken to him. (Turns to PETTIBONE. Down L. of PETTIBONE.)*

PET. (L. C.). Madam, I have discovered everything — everything!

MRS. P. (L. ; *with a cheerful look at SMYTHE, who is up C.*). Oh, I'm very glad he told you! I hope you are satisfied with my choice.

PET. Satis — ! (*Stops in utter amazement.*)

MRS. P. Yes. Mr. Smythe is a most deserving young man, and of a very good family.

PET. (*becoming wild*). What in the devil's name do I care for his family!

MRS. P. (L.). Have you any objection to him?

PET. (L. C. ; *with scathing irony*). Oh — not at all — not

at all. And the other (*looks at BENDER, R.*), how about his family?

MRS. P. What other?

PET. Allow me. (*Takes MRS. PETTIBONE by the hand rather roughly, and leads her up to BENDER, who rises, and stands surprised L. of R. table.*) [MCSNATH is near BENDER. Here is the other! Quite a gathering of your agreeable friends!

BEND. (*having risen; politely to PETTIBONE*). May I beg the honor of an introduction?

PET. (C.). You mean to say you don't know my wife?

[*Slight pause. All quiet. MCSNATH comes down to R. of PETTIBONE.*

MCSN. (*low but earnest voice*). Look here! Is that your wife? [READY EMILY to enter L. 3 E.

PET. (*looking at MRS. PETTIBONE*). Certainly.

[MCSNATH gives one look, then turns abruptly about, and walks off at door up R. rapidly. Others watch
EXIT of MCSNATH up R. D.

(*Turning to MRS. PETTIBONE*.) Rosabelle — how am I to explain your presence here?

MRS. P. (L.). Very simply. I took advantage of your absence in Hamburg —

PET. (L. C.). Ahem! (*Bus.*)

MRS. P. — to come here with Emily and bring about an understanding between her and Mr. Smythe (*indicating SMYTHE, who is up C.*), who have loved each other a long time, but were afraid to speak to you.

PET. (*after looking at SMYTHE, etc.*). Rosabelle — you will forgive me — I have been behaving like a lunatic — because I thought that he —

MRS. P. Yes — I know.

[PETTIBONE goes up and shakes hands with SMYTHE.

MRS. PETTIBONE goes up with him. •

EMILY (*peeping out at door L. 3*). I can come now, can't I?

[*READY* EVANGELINE and JOSEPHINE, to enter up R. and R. 3 E.

MRS. P. Yes — yes.

[*EMILY ENTERS* at door L. 3, and goes quickly to SMYTHE, C. *Bus.* PETTIBONE kisses her, etc.

PET. (*comes down; to ALFRED*). But wait. Wait, I say. How about Alfred?

ALF. (*seated R.*). Yes — you've overlooked me entirely. (*Rises to C.*)

[*EMILY, MRS. PETTIBONE, and others looking on.*

PET. (L. C.). You — you were going to marry her, weren't you?

[*READY* TOM, to enter up R.

ALF. (R. C.; *pulls out the paper used in Act 1*). That is my impression. And this little document you signed just before you left, will answer very well in a law-suit.

PET.

MRS. P. } Law-suit! Mercy on us! Dear me! (*Etc.*)

EMILY }

[*SMYTHE and EMILY C., cross and go down R.*

ALF. But on the whole, I'll let it go, and resign myself to my fate. (*Crosses back, meeting SMYTHE and EMILY; shakes hands and congratulates them both, and up round to C.*)

BEND. (*seated L. of R. table*). Yes — and the reason is, if you'll permit me to speak, that his fate is to become my son-in-law. [*The PETTIBONE family surprised.*

MRS. P. (L.). Ah — this noble resignation!

ENTER EVANGELINE, door up R. *As she comes on,*
JOSEPHINE *ENTERS*, door R. 3, *meeting her R.*
On JOSEPHINE'S entrance, BENDER rises and stands
stiffly and unmoved.

JOS. (L. C.). Evangeline, I will go to the hotel —

EVAN. (*up R. C.*). Mamma! (*Stopping her, and indicating the gathering in the room.*)

ALF. (*going up for bus.*). Mrs. Bender, Evangeline — my uncle, my aunt, my cousin, and Mr. Smythe. (*Bus.*)

ENTER TOM, door up R., running in with great noise and slam, so that all look around.

TOM (to C.). Mrs. Bender! Mrs. Bender! I've got that there lawyer fur ye at last. He's comin' up the steps. (TOM stops up stage, looking at the crowd.)

ALF. (up L. C.; *entreatingly*). Ah—Mrs. Bender—be merciful!

EVAN. (up R. C.; *with feeling*). Mamma—think of papa—think of us all.

[JOSEPHINE, up C., looks at BENDER. She begins to smile as if her stern resolve were melting. BENDER still stands rigid. JOSEPHINE comes down to BENDER.

JOS. Theodore—

BEND. (R. of JOSEPHINE). I'm dead!

JOS. (L. of BENDER). That depends upon me, Theodore.

BEND. Do you think of resurrecting me?

JOS. For the children's sake, I do

BEND. Then I forgive you.

[JOSEPHINE sits in chair L. of R. table, BENDER kneeling a little to L. of her; *simpering forgiveness, etc.*

MUSIC. Bright and catchy bit to end piece. Play pp. until cue "I Gits Half." Then forte for curtain.

PET. (L.). Look here, Alfred, how in the world did all this come about—eh? [MRS. PETTIBONE L., EMILY R.

MRS. P. and EMILY (together). Yes—how was it? We'd like to know. [READY Curtain.

ALF. (C.; *seizing TOM and bringing him down on his L.*). Through a little idea of mine in which I was ably assisted by taking this young man into partnership on the sole condition—

TOM. That I gits half.

[RING Curtain.

CURTAIN.

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ACT III.—SCENE AS BEFORE. A flattering arrangement.—"Look here, I ain't no angel!"—Polly's plan.—Willie in trouble again.—Gertie and the widow have another tiff.—"Sufferin' Cyrus, what shall I do!"—Another scheme smashed.—Mary Ann Fogarty on the servant question.—Gertie catches a man at last.—"The circus is going to begin."—Willie runs amuck with wan av de foinest.—Madder's masterpiece.—The "boomer" takes a trick.—"I'm as happy as ef I owned the hull state of Texas!"—Gertie on the warpath.—"O, Chub, that kerflumuxes me!"—Willie and the widow.—"I've got a little lie and I can't tell a hatchet."—The last scheme knocked in the head.—"WHAT'S NEXT?"

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